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# **The Cape Squadron, Admiral Baldwin Walker and the Suppression of the Slave Trade (1861-4)**

by

**Matthew Chiswell CHSMAT001**

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the degree of Master of Arts in Historical Studies.

Department of Historical Studies

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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University of Cape Town

## **Abstract:**

This dissertation is a study of the Royal Navy's campaign against the slave trade from their base at the Cape of Good Hope from 1861-4. During this period the Cape Squadron (which included the West African Station at this point) was under the command of Rear Admiral Sir Baldwin Walker. Under his command the first major successes against the East African slave trade were achieved.

The study comprises of three main sections. The first gives background information about the Royal Navy, international relations and the state of the slave trade suppression at the time. The second examines the actions of the Cape Squadron under Walker's command. The third section gives detail of the cruises of specific Royal Navy ships and evaluates their success (or otherwise) in suppressing the slave trade.

Themes explored in this dissertation include the international nature of the slave trade, the policy of substituting legitimate trade for the slave trade, the influence of naval technology and how interactions between 'men on the spot' affected the success of suppression. Also explored is Britain's motivation for undertaking so difficult and expensive a task.

Conclusions drawn are that the international nature of the slave trade and the lack of treaties (regarding the right to search shipping) with some powers, particularly France, greatly hindered the Royal Navy's suppression efforts. The substitution of legitimate trade for the slave trade worked successfully on the West African Coast but many of the legitimate enterprises relied upon slave labour, a fact which the British and other European powers chose to ignore. The personal interaction between men on the spot proved to be an important factor in determining the success (or failure) of the slave trade suppression efforts. New naval technologies were not as effective as they could have been in suppressing the slave trade due to the poor quality of ships assigned to the slave patrol (although this was remedied somewhat during Admiral Walker's tenure as Commander-in-Chief of the Cape Squadron). Britain's motivation for undertaking the suppression of the slave trade is shown to have been a combination of humanitarian concerns and political and economic expediency.



A number of archival sources were consulted during this research with the most useful being Baldwin Walker's papers and letters which are lodged with the University of Cape Town's Manuscripts and Archives Library. They proved to be an invaluable primary resource giving an excellent insight into the Squadron's activities during this period.

Matthew Gerald Fleming Chiswell

P.O. Box 44272

Linden

2104

South Africa

University of Cape Town

## **Contents:**

<b>Table of Contents:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1) The Royal Navy and Slavery in the 1860s</b>	<b>14</b>
1) Life in the Royal Navy in 1861	14
2) The International Nature of the Slave Trade	29
3) The State of Slave Trade Suppression in 1861	50
<b>2) The Cape Squadron under Admiral Walker's command</b>	<b>64</b>
A brief biography	64
Baldwin Walker's life at the Cape	71
The Cape Squadron Suppresses the Slave Trade	80
Relations with other Powers	92
Other duties performed by the Cape Squadron	105
<b>3) Cruises of specific Royal Navy Ships</b>	<b>120</b>
HMS <i>Lyra</i>	120
HMS <i>Sidon</i>	124
HMS <i>Gorgon</i>	134
HMS <i>Ariel</i>	139
HMS <i>Penguin</i>	144
HMS <i>Pantaloön</i>	149
Other noteworthy cruises:	153
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>169</b>
Appendix A – Cape Station cruising orders – Eastern Division	169
Appendix B: East Coast Captures:	183
<b>References:</b>	<b>186</b>

## **Introduction:**

The abolition of slavery is one of the greatest humanitarian achievements of all time. The campaign against the slave trade was a long and arduous task in which the Royal Navy played a prominent role. Using her superior naval strength Britain attempted to halt this vile traffic through her naval bases in West Africa, the Cape of Good Hope and India with the establishment of the slave patrol. Life on the slave patrol was difficult and dangerous and yet was a highly sought after posting amongst Royal Navy men. To understand why Britain undertook this campaign one needs to examine the factors leading to her taking the momentous decision to halt the slave trade.

Britain played a major role in the development of the transatlantic slave trade. This trade was at its peak during the eighteenth century (1780s) at which point British shipping carried approximately half of the 70 000 or more slaves that were being transported annually across the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> Most of these slaves were taken to the booming sugar plantations which were supplying the ever rising demand for their product in Europe.

Slave merchants were widely respected businessmen and made vast fortunes. Why then did Britain lead the crusade against first the slave trade and later against slavery itself?

Britain was the first to experience the industrial revolution and the profound change in thinking on moral and economic issues that went with it. In the Marxist view the revolution caused “contradictions between different modes of production”.<sup>2</sup>

It has also been theorised that due to the fact that Britain’s colonies in the Caribbean were far better stocked with slaves than those of France or Spain it was in her economic interest to halt the slave trade altogether and thus maintain her considerable labour advantage in the region.<sup>3</sup> Middle class evangelists who managed to convince the ruling elite that abolition was in Britain’s best interests led the crusade against slavery. When Britain abolished the slave trade in 1808, it was done at least partly to

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<sup>1</sup> H. Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade :1440-1870*. (London, 1997), 447.

<sup>2</sup> P. E. Lovejoy. *Transformations in Slavery: A history of slavery in Africa*. (Cambridge, 1983), 246.

<sup>3</sup> For a thorough and compelling examination of this and other Caribbean and colonial slave issues see R. Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776 – 1848* (London, 1988).

legitimate Britain's ruling order and to provide a moral incentive and idealism for the empire.<sup>4</sup> The ruling classes attempted to use the issue to deflect egalitarian reforms from below.

When she freed her own slaves in 1838 Britain took a bold step which angered many of her wealthiest citizens. Yet she did not free the slaves in British India until 1862 (and until 1907 in British East Africa) fearing that this would cause an economic catastrophe there.<sup>5</sup> Was this then a great victory for the moral crusaders or a shrewd economic move? Another example is that she funded the astronomically expensive campaign against the slave trade whilst turning a blind eye to the slave grown produce her markets desired. Yet another questionable policy was the use of forced labour of prize slaves (also called recaptives – slaves whom the Royal Navy had 'rescued' from slave ships) in British Colonies.

There is also considerable evidence of the involvement of British capital in the illegal slave trade, in particular from Brazil. Much of Brazilian industry was financed by British capital.<sup>6</sup> Thus of the forty six illicit sailings which took place from Bahia in 1848 it is reasonable to suppose that many were secretly funded by British businessmen. Due to the fact that the slave ships' crews could not be punished under British law (as they were foreigners) many were soon back at work again.

The history of Britain's campaign against the slave trade (which was to a large degree a solo undertaking, especially on the East Coast of Africa) is fraught with contradictions such as these which depending on how they are viewed can support either the moral or economic argument. What is without a doubt however is that without Britain's efforts slavery would have endured far longer, in many more countries. The British campaign against the slave trade was the greatest moral event of the nineteenth century and possibly of all time.

By the 1840s most of the slave trade from West Africa had been suppressed and the abolitionists had lost much of their urgency and public support was dwindling. By the

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<sup>4</sup> T. Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*. (Johannesburg, 1996), 79.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 787.

<sup>6</sup> D. Scarr, *Slaving and Slavery in the Indian Ocean*. (London, 1998), 112.

1860s however the growth of British trade in East Africa and the rising awareness of the slave trade that existed there amongst the British public gave the abolitionists a new cause to rally around. Explorers and missionaries, the most famous of whom was David Livingstone, began to enter the interior of Africa and carried horrific tales home about the devastation the slave trade was still causing there. Soon pressure began to mount on the British government to act.

The Cape Squadron of the Royal Navy was initially formed when the British occupied the Cape for the second time in 1806. In 1815 it was moved to Simonstown (near Cape Town) which provided a more sheltered harbour for all seasons. For the first few years of the Squadron's existence its primary task was to patrol the seas near St. Helena where Napoleon was exiled. When Napoleon died in 1821 the Squadron's importance diminished somewhat and she experienced a drop in the number of vessels assigned to her. With the increasing value of the sea route to India however the Cape retained sufficient strategic importance to maintain a naval squadron. The responsibility for suppressing the West African slave trade fell to the West African Squadron which was for many years based in Sierra Leone. The Cape Squadron shared the responsibility for patrolling the East Coast of Africa with the Bombay Marine (which was later to become the Indian Navy). The extent of each Squadron's borders varied with time and according to the priorities of the Royal Navy in the period. After the successful suppression of much of the West African slave trade by the 1840s the importance of maintaining two squadrons diminished and the two were amalgamated or split according to the prevailing ideas of the Royal Navy Planners and Foreign Office.

When Rear Admiral Sir Baldwin Walker assumed command of the Cape Squadron in 1861 the two Squadrons were united and he was to command both. The command was nominally split into the West and East Coast Stations with a commodore running the West Coast Station and a captain or commander in charge of the lesser East Coast Station. Walker's appointment was to have a marked effect on the Squadron as he was an influential man in the Royal Navy. He had led a distinguished and interesting career and had a keen interest in the latest naval techniques and technologies. The 1860s were an important period of naval advancement and Admiral Walker had the knowledge and influence to put many of the new innovations to good use in the

suppression of the slave trade. I provide a more detailed description of his career and abilities in the second section entitled 'Baldwin Walker at the Cape'.

I chose to study the period of Admiral Walker's tenure at the Cape (1861-4) due to the good fortune of the majority of his personal papers being on permanent loan to the Manuscripts and Archives Department of the University of Cape Town Library. These papers have proved indispensable to my study of the subject. Most of the other primary documentation relating to the Royal Navy's time at the Cape is now held in the Public Records Office in London. I have been unable to Consult these (which include ships' logs, Royal Navy Correspondence, Foreign Office Reports, Vice-Admiralty Court Records and a wealth of other valuable information) due to budget constraints.

I have studied the papers relating to the period of Admiral Walker's command and believe they have given me a privileged, personal insight into the Squadron at the time. The history of the actions of the Squadron on the East Coast of Africa has been written about only sparingly and there is I believe enormous scope for study on this important topic. There have been studies done on the East African Slave Trade but little at all on the Royal Navy's suppression of it. Modern authors I would recommend for an overview of the subject include Raymond Howell<sup>7</sup> and W.E.F. Ward<sup>8</sup>. There are also some fascinating books by men who served on board Royal Navy Ships during the nineteenth century and who provide a first hand and often entertaining account of their travels although they are difficult to get hold of. These include Captain Charles Colomb<sup>9</sup>, Admiral George Sullivan<sup>10</sup> and W. Cope Devereux<sup>11</sup>

For readers requiring background on the slave trade in general Hugh Thomas's book on the Atlantic slave trade is an excellent resource.<sup>12</sup> Abdul Sheriff's work provides a

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<sup>7</sup> R. Howell, *The Royal Navy and the Slave Trade*. (London, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> W.E.F. Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers : The suppression of the Atlantic slave trade*. (London, 1969).

<sup>9</sup> J.C.R. Colomb, *Slave catching in the Indian Ocean: A record of Naval experiences* (London, 1873).

<sup>10</sup> G.L. Sullivan G.L., *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters and on the Eastern Coast of Africa*. (London, 1968) – republication.

<sup>11</sup> W.C. Devereux, *A Cruise in the Gorgon*, (London, 1968) – republication.

<sup>12</sup> H. Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade : 1440-1870*. (London, 1997).

detailed history of Zanzibar.<sup>13</sup> Deryck Scarr provides an informative and useful insight into the slave trade in the Indian Ocean.<sup>14</sup>

In this dissertation I have attempted to provide the reader with an introduction to the subject but one which will be of use in future research. To these ends I have tried to provide background to the various issues I deal with while including interesting new facts and anecdotes about life on the slaving patrol. Initially I intended to study only the East Coast Station but due to the shared responsibility of the Squadron at the time I have included some information about the West Coast which I hope is pertinent and new. I have however still maintained my focus strongly on the East Coast and the actions of the ships there.

For future research the Baldwin Walker collection which formed the basis of much of this dissertation contains a wealth of information that is of great and varied interest. Examples of this are his time spent in the Turkish Navy and his part in actions in support of Greek Independence. There is also a good record of the prevailing discussions about naval architecture during his life including screw versus paddle propulsion, the development of iron hulls and the tremendous excitement exhibited by the proponents of the various views.

I have broken down this dissertation into three main sections (five with introduction and conclusion).

1. The first of these I have entitled 'The Royal Navy and Slavery in the 1860s'.

In this section I have three main aims.

- I provide a background to the Royal Navy at the time when Admiral Walker assumed command of the Cape Squadron. Included in this are the vessels of the time and the troubles

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<sup>13</sup> A. Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Economic Integration of East Africa into the World Economy*. (London, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> D. Scarr, *Slaving and Slavery in the Indian Ocean*. (London, 1998).

associated with the transition to steam and other new technologies. I detail naval life and conditions of service on ships of the anti-slaving patrol.

- My second aim is to provide a background to the state of the suppression of slavery at the start of Walker's period of command. This involves describing trouble spots and issues related to him by his predecessor Admiral Keppel as well as various briefings given to him by the Foreign Office and 'men on the spot'.
  - My third aim in this section is to provide the reader with a glimpse of the international nature of the slave trade and how relations between different nations affected the Royal Navy's implementation of their suppression policies. I focus on Portugal and France which were the two European powers, other than Britain, dominant in pre-colonial Africa. They offer different diplomatic realities with the typical rivalry between Britain and France hindering suppression efforts considerably. Portugal and Britain's relations in comparison were on the surface cordial but experienced a deeper running conflict with Britain often attempting to influence Portuguese policy. I also explore relations with the United States and Liberia
2. The second section I have entitled 'Admiral Walker Commands the Cape Squadron'. This section has three subsections.
- Firstly I describe the man Baldwin Wake Walker. This involves a short biography of what can only be described as an extraordinary life. I briefly run through his achievements, postings all over the world and attempt to reconstruct the man whose life was of great importance to the Royal Navy in the nineteenth century. I explore his interest in naval architecture and how it benefited the squadron.



- Secondly I detail his time at the Cape and describe his goals, significance and achievements in suppressing the slave trade.
  - Thirdly I explore the squadron's relations with France and Portugal which were key in the effort to suppress the traffic.
  - Lastly I explore the actions which the squadron took part in not directly related to the slave trade during his tenure. These include colonial administration and protection and his encounter with the notorious Confederate Raider the CSS *Alabama*.
3. The third section is entitled 'Chasing Slavers in the Indian Ocean'. In this section I describe cruises of specific Royal Navy ships which I believe illustrate the varied experiences common on Royal Navy ships involved in the anti-slaving patrol of the time. These examples include the problems aboard the ships and boats, relations between the various 'men on the spot', great successes and tragedies. This section I feel gives an accurate idea of the realities of life aboard a Royal Navy Vessel during the 1860s. Some of the vessels I describe are:
- HMS *Orestes* and how the strained relations between her Captain Crawford and Colonel Rigby, the British Consul at Zanzibar, harmed the British Suppression Effort.
  - HMS *Lyra* and her magnificent successes against slaving dhows around Zanzibar.
  - HMS *Gorgon* and her Commander Wilson whose successes against dhows brought him into conflict with the inexperienced British Consul at Zanzibar, Colonel Pelly.

- HMS *Penguin* and the massacre of two of her boats' crews along the Somali Coastline.
- The near wreck of HMS *Pantaloön* near Pemba in Mozambique.

In conclusion I assess the progress made by the Cape Squadron during Admiral Walker's period of command, the challenges that the squadron was yet to face and the effects of their efforts on the history of Africa and the world in general. I have included appendices detailing the orders issued to the men on board the Royal Navy's ships and boats and examples of bi-annual reports of slave ship captures on both the East and West Coast of Africa.

Throughout my dissertation I explore certain central themes. These include the international nature of the slave trade and how this affected the suppression of it, the transition from the slave trade to legitimate trade and the problems encountered therewith, the influence of naval technology on the suppression of the trade and the lives of the men, how personal interactions affected the success of the squadron and the differing attitudes of the Royal Navy Men to the various nations they encountered during their duties.

I hope that you the reader find this subject as fascinating as I do.

## **1) The Royal Navy and Slavery in the 1860s**

In order to examine the effectiveness of the Royal Navy's Cape Squadron during Baldwin Walker's tenure it is necessary to understand the conditions under which they were serving. In this section I give a summary of the factors influencing their difficult task as follows. I first deal with life on the Royal Navy Slaving Patrol, then the international nature of the slave trade and finally the attempts to transform slave trading economies into legitimate trading economies.

### **1) Life in the Royal Navy in 1861**

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Royal Navy was in a state of great change. New technologies such as steam power, iron hulls, new advances in weaponry and changing attitudes to naval discipline were the subject of great debate. The average sailor's life changed dramatically during this time and it is necessary to recognise how this affected the Cape Squadron's implementation of Britain's slave trade suppression policy.

### **A Brief History of the Royal Navy**

Geography favoured Britain's imperial and naval expansion. She could take advantage of the westerly winds (being on the west side of Europe) while these same winds kept her continental European foes pinned in their harbours.<sup>15</sup> Large deposits of coal in Britain enabled British merchants to carry cargo on both legs of a voyage and thus undercut their competitors. A British ship sailing for example to Chile could carry coal on the outward voyage and nitrates on the homebound. Later the large quantities of British manufactured goods provided a similar advantage. After

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<sup>15</sup> A. Preston & J. Major *Send a Gunboat! : A study of the Gunboat and its role in British Policy, 1854-1904*. (London, 1967), 4.

Waterloo (1815) Europe offered little resistance to British expansion. The years of wars and resultant loss of economic growth had exhausted Britain's traditional foes.

At the beginning of the suppression era, the Royal Navy had been greatly expanded to guard against the Napoleonic threat, while at the same time protecting British commercial interests from the US, Holland, Denmark and Spain.<sup>16</sup> In 1815 the Royal Navy consisted of 240 ships of the line (heavily armed, slow battleships), 317 frigates (comparatively lightly armed reconnaissance ships) and numerous smaller vessels. These were crewed mostly by pressed men. By 1835 the navy had been reduced to fewer than 300 ships in total.

The British Admiralty and parliament attempted to cut the cost of the navy every year.<sup>17</sup> This meant in practice the retention of obsolete ships and weapons which was very inefficient and discouraged new tactics and effective training. An example of this foolish economy was the Admiralty's standing order to minimise the use of coal which resulted in valuable ships being wrecked while trying to ride out rough weather under sail alone. Despite these poor policies the Royal Navy was able to remain superior to foreign navies for many years. Individual foreign ships may have been faster and more manoeuvrable but the British maintained vastly superior numbers. Steam power was initially applied to auxiliary vessels such as tugs and dispatch vessels. It was also added as supplementary power for larger vessels. The majority of peacetime tasks were left to minor warships i.e. sloops, frigates and brigs.

The Royal Navy's period of stagnation allowed other countries' navies to catch up. The Royal Navy continued using muzzleloaders while the French and German navies developed working breechloaders.<sup>18</sup> A lack of imagination persuaded the Royal Navy that these developments were not worth imitating. The Royal Navy also ignored other developments such as the torpedo. The combination of these factors over the years led to Britain's loss of naval supremacy.

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<sup>16</sup> Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers*, 22-4.

<sup>17</sup> Preston & Major, *Send a gunboat*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 145.

Naval action was meant to result in the cost of shipping slaves across the Atlantic increasing to the point where it became cheaper to use free labour. It was also hoped to lower the price of slaves in Africa until it became uneconomic to trade in slaves. Unfortunately, neither of these outcomes proved easy to achieve and in 1850 a survey of a group of senior Royal Navy officers revealed that they believed that the Royal Navy's efforts should be scaled down until it was possible to enact penalties against all slavers captured.<sup>19</sup>

## Seamen

After the Napoleonic Wars the pressed men (and quota men i.e. national service) were no longer needed. Until 1836 the Royal Navy continued to recruit its seamen for short periods of service dismissing them when the ships commission ended or they were no longer needed. The higher ranking seamen such as gunners, boatswains and carpenters might stay on the same ship for years while the ratings came and went annually or even more frequently. The conditions of service on the lower decks were improved by a series of reforms beginning in 1836. In 1853 an act established the long service system allowing seamen to serve for longer periods and even make a career in the navy. In 1866 the Naval Discipline Act greatly improved the conditions of employment on Royal Navy ships. Commissioned officers had for a century before 1815 enjoyed security of tenure with the navy obligating itself to keep the officer on half-pay when a seagoing position was not available. For an officer to rise through the ranks he needed not only seniority and merit but also the patronage or favour of a more senior officer. This is clearly exhibited from the number of letters of recommendation contained in the Baldwin Walker collection examined in this study. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the rise in rank came to be achieved through a special naval college. An aspiring officer needed to find a captain willing to have him on board his ship and give him the practical experience and instruction necessary to pass the professional examinations. A further requirement was that the candidate had spent a specified amount of time at sea. It had thus become possible (but not probable) for men from the lower decks to rise to a commissioned rank with their captain's recommendation and after they had passed the exams. A critical step in an officer's

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<sup>19</sup> D. Eltis, *Economic growth and the ending of the trans-Atlantic slave trade*, (New York, 1987), 81.

career was to be put in charge of a ship of the sixth rank or better. After this was attained it was only a matter of time and experience before he rose to the rank of Admiral (barring an incident that led to his dismissal) After the Napoleonic wars the Royal Navy had over 200 Admirals, nearly 900 Captains and over 5 000 other officers, few of whom could hope for seagoing employment during peacetime.

The Royal Navy had used Kroomen on board navy ships on the West Coast of Africa with great success for many years. These sailors, who came from the Kru nation of West Africa, were for the most part held in high regard by the British sailors. The Royal Navy hoped by spreading the program to the East Coast that the same success could be achieved. In the long run the Kroomen were not as successful as those on the West Coast as they had no knowledge of local geography nor of local languages. They were however still far more resistant to tropical diseases such as malaria than the British seamen. This is borne out by the fact that they were not issued quinine when the other sailors were. (see appendix A - cruising orders). The Royal Navy did start using recruits from the East Coast who became known as Seedies<sup>20</sup> but they never gained the wide renown of the Kroomen. To this end all vessels employed as cruisers on the East Coast were allowed to be allocated Kroomen according to the following scale: <sup>21</sup>

<b>6<sup>th</sup> rates and sloops</b> (with 170 men upwards):	1 head Kroomen, 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> head Kroomen, 10 Kroomen.
<b>All other vessels:</b>	1 head Kroomen, 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> head Kroomen, 6 Kroomen.

All vessels sent to the Cape were ordered to put in at Sierra Leone for the purpose of procuring Kroomen. Permission was also given for 3 black stokers to be employed in

<sup>20</sup> It is believed that the name Seedies stems from the Arabic *sidis* meaning Negro slave as opposed to *habshis* or Abyssinian slaves. J.B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, (Oxford, 1968), 413.

<sup>21</sup> University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archives Library (hereafter MSS), Baldwin Walker Collection (hereafter BC356) A.1.2 A529, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1862.

place of 2 white stokers provided they could be relied upon and found to be good workers (no doubt as they were cheaper).<sup>22</sup>

When the slave trade was abolished in 1807 the Royal Navy offered a bounty of £60 for a man, £30 for a woman and £10 for a child slave captured. In 1824 this was reduced to a flat rate of £10 per slave and in 1830 it was further reduced to £5.<sup>23</sup> These prizes were reviewed a number of times more and the total prize money was divided between the crew according to rank with the admiral in charge of the ship's station also taking a cut.

The Royal Navy had over the nineteenth century begun to tighten its regulations as to the issuing of punishment. To this end general instructions were issued regulating the punishment of the boys serving on board naval ships. In particular Commander Oldfield at the time in charge of HMS *Lyra* (and subsequently of HMS *Ariel*) was informed that the maximum number of stripes which could be given to a boy was six.<sup>24</sup> According to the quarterly returns of punishment on board HMS *Ranger* (where he had previously served) there were cases where 12-16 stripes were issued. This fact was excused as the new instructions limiting the punishment had not yet been received and the Lords of the Admiralty were happy to observe that the offence was not serious and that the punishment was not excessive.

Disciplinary problems were not limited to seamen however. One of the first orders that Walker received when he arrived in Simonstown was that he was to take steps to halt the smuggling of tobacco and cigars by officers aboard Royal Navy ships.<sup>25</sup> The fact that officers were smuggling contraband suggests that the reality differed greatly from the image of Royal Navy officers as honourable men so often portrayed. If they were willing to break petty restrictions perhaps the inviolability of an officer's word can be called into question. However there is a great difference between not paying customs duties for personal use (there is no suggestion of commercial smuggling) and lying to one's fellow officers and superiors. Thus I believe the reminder of the law the

<sup>22</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A1100, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1863.

<sup>23</sup> Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers*, 102.

<sup>24</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A564, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1862.

<sup>25</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A16, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

officers received was merely an affirmation of regulations and not a slight on the character of the men themselves.

## Life on the Slave Patrols

The work on the Royal Navy Slave Patrols was often very tedious and in some cases officers and men went mad. Slaves were often loaded at night. The naval captains would wait some 35-40 miles out at dawn in an attempt to capture them. Western slavers used a system of light signals to communicate with the shore. e.g. 1 light meant it was safe to come into port, 2 lights meant don't come in, 3 lights meant sail away as fast as possible. The navy would often have to do battle with the slavers before they would surrender. Many officers and men were injured during these confrontations but in most cases the slavers' ship was far worse damaged than the Royal Navy vessel. Once captured, a prize vessel was manned by a small prize crew who were sometimes attacked by the crew of the slaver. This was especially common when the prize vessel herself captured a slaver and the skeleton crew had to be spread even thinner between the two vessels.<sup>26</sup>

One such case was that of the Portuguese vessel *Felicidade* which was captured in 1845 by HMS *Wasp* while en route to Luanda and found to be equipped with slaves. A prize crew was put on board. Two days later a Brazilian vessel, the *Echo* was sighted and chased. She was found to have 400 slaves on board. HMS *Wasp* had been left behind so the *Felicidade* sent a detachment to take over the *Echo*. The remaining Royal Navy sailors on the *Felicidade* were attacked by the Portuguese crew. Some of the prize crew were killed and the others thrown overboard. The *Felicidade* briefly chased the *Echo* (and her prize crew) but the ships became separated. Soon after HMS *Star* came upon the *Felicidade* and searched her, finding blood stains on the deck. The crew confessed what had happened and were shipped to England to stand trial. The *Felicidade* was sent to St. Helena for adjudication by the prize court but sank in a storm. Lieutenant Wilson and the crew took to a raft and were picked up by HMS

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 719-22.



*Cygnets*. The prisoners reached England in the meantime where they were found guilty of murder. On appeal it was ruled that a British court did not have authority over a Brazilian vessel and her crew even if they had murdered British sailors. The crew was shipped back to Brazil at British cost. This caused an uproar and ‘remember the *Felicidade*’ was to be heard in Royal Navy circles for many years thereafter.

Service on the East African anti-slaving patrol was an unpleasant and dangerous experience. It was generally agreed that three years in the service was the most men could be expected to bear.<sup>27</sup> Work in the small boats was particularly unpleasant as the crew were away from medical attention for long periods of time and slept amongst swarms of mosquitoes (see appendix A – cruising orders). Many of the crew thus suffered from malaria and other tropical fevers. It was dangerous from the human element too. The Arab slavers often fought desperately and a number of boats were attacked when ashore for fresh water or supplies. On the whole the duties were a tedious business with incessant boarding of dhows and prolonged inspections often resulting in an acquittal. The normal tedium was broken only by the occasional skirmish or chase.

For the British Navy the policy of restriction was a costly business, both monetarily and in human lives. It was not particularly effective either as far more slaves managed to be smuggled past the patrol than were caught by it. There were various reasons for this failure including the fact that 7 or 8 ships were far too few to police over 6,000 kilometres of coastline. The short length of service meant that the officers and men were often inexperienced. The local interpreters could also often not be trusted. In addition to this the fact that Arabs (and Portuguese) were allowed to carry their domestic slaves made it very difficult to ascertain if the vessel was trading in or simply transporting slaves. This was the largest problem for the squadron as while the legal transport continued it was impossible to stop smuggling. On the West Coast of Africa any vessel with slaves on board was a slaver while on the East Coast the vessels often carried a mixture of slaves and other cargo such as rice or coconuts.

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<sup>27</sup> R. Coupland. *The exploitation of East Africa*, (London, 1939), 163.

From 1816-65, Britain is estimated to have spent £12 395 million on direct slave trade suppression costs. This is thought to be over ninety percent of the total spent on suppression by the European and US governments.<sup>28</sup>

## The diet of the Cape Squadron

The Squadron at the Cape existed on the same boring food as the rest of the Royal Navy for the most part. The men lived mostly on rations of salted beef or pork, dried peas and bread or ships biscuits. This was sometimes supplemented by fresh fruit, vegetables and meat when a ship had recently been in port. The men in the boats occupied themselves with fishing (surplus was salted for use in the ships when they returned) and collecting oysters. These foods provided a welcome break from the usual routine. The men were in the habit of cooking the ingredients they had as a kettler which was a mishmash of meat, preserved vegetables, biscuits, flour and seasonings cooked together in the same boiler. This was served to officers and men alike and is reported to have been an exceptionally tasty mixture of otherwise bland ingredients.

The long periods of time away from areas where supplies were readily available meant that the ships (and to a lesser extent boats) had to carry enough provisions for some months. Refrigeration was of course non-existent and so in order to provide fresh meat live animals needed to be carried. On one occasion on leaving Zanzibar HMS *Castor* carried 20-30 bullocks, as well as sheep, pigs and chickens. This led to the main deck appearing “more like a farmyard than a battery” as it usually did when they left Zanzibar for a southward cruise.<sup>29</sup>

Upon leaving Johanna on one occasion, Captain Sullivan (at the time a midshipman) of HMS *Castor* recalled that there were fifty bullocks crammed between the guns on the main deck.<sup>30</sup> All these animals necessitated the crew to care for them and so

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<sup>28</sup> Eltis, *Economic growth*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Sullivan. *Dhow Chasing*, 75.

<sup>30</sup> Sullivan was one of the most widely known figures of the East African Slave Patrol. He served as midshipman aboard HMS *Castor* in 1849 and later wrote a book about his experiences during this cruise which was originally published in 1873. Sullivan returned to the coast three times more. The

farmyard chores became part of the sailors' duties. Commodore Wyville, who "was always astonishing us with something original and inexplicable" on one occasion demoted an able seaman for being unable to make a decent haystack.<sup>31</sup>

Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Royal Navy made the transition from wooden casks to iron water tanks. This greatly improved the health aboard ship as the wooden casks were an ideal home for insects, worms and diseases of every description, particularly in the tropics. The daily issue of rum was essential in combating the monotony of the diet and the foul tasting water.

Towards the end of Walker's period the Royal Navy began to try out preserved foods such as vegetables and meat. HMS *Seringapatam*'s crew was issued with biscuits manufactured at the Cape.<sup>32</sup> This was to function as a trial and the men expressed that they far preferred it to the usual biscuit (which was no doubt stale if not full of weevils). The Cape biscuit was 'superior in quality and more palatable' than the standard Royal Navy biscuit but it was not recommended to have more than a month's supply onboard at a time.

Disease (particularly Malaria) was a great fear and for this reason 'the main brace was spliced' (an extra ration of spirits was served mixed with quinine). Quinine was a relatively new discovery to Europeans (Capt. Owen's survey of the East African Coastline in the 1820s lost large numbers of men (about 200) to Malaria which could have been avoided through the use of quinine) although people in Madagascar had been using it for centuries.<sup>33</sup> The Cape Squadron was often issued gin with which they mixed their prophylactic quinine.

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first in command of HMS *Pantaloön* in 1864, then HMS *Daphne* in 1869 and lastly HMS *London* (the stationary depot ship long requested to check the trade at Zanzibar) in 1874.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>32</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.4 S794, Captain Cockburn to Walker, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1863.

<sup>33</sup> The use of quinine was initially brought to European attention by the Jesuits in South America. They were already using it during the sixteenth century and its use spread with the Jesuit missionaries across the world. Jesuits brought knowledge of its use to Madagascar and from there the knowledge spread throughout the Indian Ocean region. Indian tonic water was initially devised as a means of disguising the vile taste of quinine.

## **Ships**

Royal Navy ships were traditionally built of English oak but during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the increasing scarcity of this timber forced the Admiralty to experiment with inferior continental timber, teak and mahogany.<sup>34</sup> The ships spars were made of Scandinavian or North American pine.

Fighting ships were classified in grades or rates according to their size and number of guns. Highest rated were ships of the line that were powerful enough to take part in fleet actions. A first rate ship had over 100 guns and over 800 men. A third rate ship had 74 guns. A fourth rate frigate had 50 guns and 350 men and a sixth rate 24 guns and 175 men. Frigates were built for speed and were the 'eyes of the fleet', never intended to join the line of battle.

The anti-slave trade patrol consisted of frigates and below. After frigates came sloops with 16-20 guns. They too were built for speed but vessels designed for the North Atlantic were often out-sailed by ships designed for tropical conditions. Sloops were light enough to enter river mouths but heavily armed enough to force a slaver to submit. Next were brigs with 2-12 guns. These two masted vessels were able to sail relatively unnoticed amongst the predominantly two masted merchantmen. They drew less water than sloops and were thus useful in shallower waters and rivers. Brigs ranged in speed according to their design. Sir Richard Seppings, chief naval designer 1813-32, greatly strengthened the hulls of his brigs but in the process made them slow and clumsy. His successor, Sir William Symonds, based his designs on racing yachts and created brigs fast enough to catch anything afloat at the time. A sloop was generally commanded by a captain, with smaller vessels under a commander or lieutenant.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century sailing ships retained a low forecastle (a relic from the days before firearms) to shield them from the sea when pitching in heavy weather. The stern was built on two levels, a quarterdeck and poop. Early in the century the gundeck was open but later came to be totally enclosed, receiving light and air only

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<sup>34</sup> Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers*, 25-9.

through the open gun ports. The gundeck was also the crew's living space with suspended tables which were lowered at meal times. They slung their hammocks from the beams at night and stowed them along the bulwark on the upper deck during the day. Each man had two hammocks so that one could be aired and dried while the other was in use. Scrubbing the hammocks was a common activity during a quiet day. The lower deck was perpetually damp.

## The Ships' Boats

The ships boats were normally stacked on spars above the gun-deck so as not to interfere with the guns' use. The largest boats were the launches or longboats which were capable of carrying cannon and anchors.<sup>35</sup> The cutter and gig were narrow and built for speed. The whaleboat was light and fast with a centreboard. All of these boats could be sailed or rowed. Smaller boats such as the dinghy, pinnace and jolly boat were intended for rowing only. A jolly boat was commonly used when a lieutenant visited another vessel to inspect her papers or to pick up men overboard.

The heavier boats could be armed with a six or nine pound carronade. These combined with the muskets normally carried meant that three or four of these boats could provide a considerable body of fire. Their weakness was that they were susceptible to small arms fire and could be bombarded by an enemy's long-range guns before their carronades came into range. Boats were often provisioned and sent to keep watch on a suspicious vessel for a few days. The larger vessels could thus greatly expand the area they could patrol and heighten their chances of running across a slaver. Deploying the boats was the only way in which the immense area of the East African Coastline could be patrolled. The boats were fitted with awnings as protection against the rain and sun.

Life in the boats was hard as they were often away from the ships for long periods of time.<sup>36</sup> On one such occasion HMS *Castor*'s pinnace was despatched with a month's provisions on board near Mafamale (for the 21 men on board) Finding the boat very

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>36</sup> Sullivan, *Dhow Chasing*, 34.

cramped it was decided to bury some supplies on a nearby island. Upon returning to the island it was discovered that the supplies had been stolen and the crew had to subsist on very little for a few days until another boat arrived (with its supplies). The two boats divided the latter's supplies and the men had to subsist on meagre rations until the return of the ship in three weeks time. Life in the boats was tough with sufficient food but without it conditions soon became desperate.

During the monsoon months the weather often made it inadvisable to sail on the high seas and the Royal Navy crews had to seek what little shelter they could find from the torrential downpour.<sup>37</sup> An amusing method devised to keep dry (as the men were usually limited to one set of day clothes a piece) was to strip off when a storm approached and after stashing one's clothes beneath a waterproof tarpaulin leap into the water until the storm passed. In this way a sailor could stay dry for at least some of the time. It is not recorded what the locals thought of this strange practice. The foul weather combined with fever, dysentery and other illnesses took a heavy toll on the health of the crew.

Ships of the line generally had two or three gun-decks (plus other decks for storage and living space) but frigates and smaller vessels only had one gun-deck.<sup>38</sup> The guns fired through hinged square ports on the vessel's sides which could be closed during bad weather. A few guns might be mounted on the fore and poop decks for use during a chase. Some smaller vessels had swivel guns with a wide range of fire. Gun crews were assigned two guns, one on each side of the ship due to the infrequency of the need to fire from both sides simultaneously. Naval tactics in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century consisted of pulling alongside your opponent and firing a broadside, hopefully demasting him or hitting his powder keg. Without these lucky shots victory was determined by the gallantry, accuracy and rate of fire of the gun crew. A skilful commander could use prevailing winds and currents to manoeuvre into a position where he could fire at the enemy without the enemy having the opportunity to return fire. A faster or nimbler ship could thus turn past the enemy's stern and fire a broadside along the length of the deck avoiding the opponent's broadside. An action fought broadside to broadside often left the victor in nearly as bad condition as the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>38</sup> Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers*, 31.

vanquished. French and Spanish gunners were trained to fire at the spars and mast in an attempt to disable the enemy while the Royal Navy concentrated their fire on killing the opposing crew and disabling their guns. At medium to long range a Royal Navy ship would suffer more damage aloft but lighter casualties but at close range the difference was less apparent. A captain might try to avoid a long and damaging engagement by grappling the enemy ship and sending a boarding party to wrest control of the opponent. A ship superior in numbers and discipline could thus capture the enemy ship in half an hour and avoid damage to their own ship. High netting on their bulwarks protected vessels against boarding.

Ships employed by the Royal Navy to suppress the slave trade shared common characteristics. They were smaller than the average British warship and had large crews due to the need for extra sailors to take charge of a prize vessel.<sup>39</sup> Tactics played an important role in the Royal Navy's fight against slaving dhows. Dhows were often swifter than the Royal Navy vessels particularly the detached boats which performed the majority of the anti-slaving work on the East Coast. These boats overloaded with crew and armament relied on co-operation, stealth and their superior weaponry to force a dhow to submit to search.

## Gunboats

Royal Navy ships used muzzle loading smooth bore guns in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Breech loading guns were first experimented with in the 1840s but without success. In the 1860s rifled barrels came into use. These fired cylindrical shot with greater range and accuracy than was possible before. The first rifled guns were breech loaders but a faulty breech loading mechanism caused the Royal Navy to revert to muzzle loaders (rifled) for a while.<sup>40</sup> The guns could fire a single solid shot (for attacking ships) or grape, canister or case shot (for killing men). Canister shot consisted of a thin metal shell, filled with balls and designed to shatter on impact and to scatter the contents. Grape shot were twice as big as canister shot and packed into three layers separated by metal plates. Later developments included explosive shells which were used from

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<sup>39</sup> Eltis, *Economic growth*, 91.

<sup>40</sup> Ward, *The Royal Navy and the Slavers*, 33.

the 1840s on. The powder was pre packed in cartridges of cloth or paper and contained the correct charge for a specific weight of shot. Guns were classified according to the weight of shot they threw e.g. 3 pounder, 32 pounder. Long guns had better range and accuracy and were usually mounted in the bow or stern. The carronade had a short barrel and range, contained a smaller charge and the projectile had a far lower velocity. They were used to shatter a ship's timbers and send deadly splinters flying. The carronade (first made at the Carron iron works in Scotland in 1779) was much lighter than a normal gun. Thus an ordinary 32 pounder weighed roughly 3 tons while a 32 pounder carronade weighed less than a ton. Carronades therefore required fewer men to work them and could be mounted in boats. The carronade had a range of 200-300 yards while a normal 32 pounder could carry 1 300 yards at extreme elevation.

Ships' guns could swing in a vertical plane (with wedges knocked in or taken out between the carriage and the barrel to adjust the angle).<sup>41</sup> Horizontal movement was only possible by levering the wheels off the deck and moving the whole contraption which was no easy task with a three ton gun. The elevation of the gun was constantly changing with the rolling of the swell and the gunner had to estimate the right time to fire so as not to lose his shot into the sea. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century ships had used pendulums to tell how the gundeck was rolling but the introduction of breech-loading, rifled guns with their longer range made more advanced gun sights essential. The gun carriage was secured to the bulwark with heavy ropes and ringbolts, partly to absorb the recoil and partly to secure the gun in heavy weather and stop it sliding wildly up and down the deck, endangering the vessel. The guns were fired by a form of flintlock fired by the gunner yanking a lanyard. If this wasn't done exactly right the gun would misfire. For this reason a lit slow match was usually kept as backup.

The Royal Navy acquired her first paddle steamer in 1822 but the Admiralty resisted their introduction as they seemed highly likely to negate the skills learnt over centuries in the sailing navy. There was resistance to other developments such as rifled guns with the navy adopting innovations only after foreign navies had and the Royal Navy's pre-eminence was threatened. It was not until the duel between the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 35-7.



*Monitor* and *Merrimac* in 1862 that the British realised they had to modernise all aspects of their navy. (The *Merrimac* was a confederate ironclad which came close to breaking the union blockade of wooden ships in the American civil war. She was only able to be stopped when confronted by the *Monitor*, a newly built union ironclad which was the first ship with a revolving, armoured turret).

Early steamships were slow, their coal bunkers took up valuable space and their huge side mounted paddles made broadside firing impossible. Their reliance on coal necessitated the maintenance of a network of coaling stations (to avoid having to burn inefficient fuel such as wood). Their only advantage at first was to be able to move when sailing ships were becalmed but this advantage was negated by the drawbacks. This all changed after the Royal Navy tested a new screw powered steamer HMS *Rattler* against the paddle powered HMS *Alecto* in 1845. The vessels were fastened together stern to stern and both engines set at full speed. The *Rattler* towed the *Alecto* at a speed of two knots and the Royal Navy henceforth favoured screws (which allowed for broadsides). Early steamers carried a full set of sails and only used their engines for auxiliary power. Many commentators were apprehensive about the risk of fire aboard the early wooden steamers. Later steamers' hulls were built of iron and subsequently steel.

The Crimean War inspired many naval innovations.<sup>42</sup> The destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope in 1853 hastened the demise of the wooden ship. The need to attack shallow water ports led to the development of vessels with shallow draughts and long-range guns. These vessels, gunboats, were to prove useful in the shallow river mouths often encountered during the suppression of the slave trade. The first gunboats were very unstable and unsuited to ocean voyages. A chronic shortage of seasoned wood during the Crimean War led to their construction out of green timber which resulted in many of them getting dry rot before ever seeing action. Slightly longer and deeper draughted vessels such as the Algerine class were developed later. These were often called gun vessels and were far more stable and thus able to make relatively safe ocean passages.<sup>43</sup> Gunboats were ideal for exerting pressure rather than preparing an area for invasion. They were used to chase pirates and slavers. Their low production

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<sup>42</sup> Preston & Major, *Send a gunboat*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-30.

costs made them ideal in the Admiralty's eyes. By the mid 1850s the Royal Navy needed new gunboats due to the hasty construction of the previous ones.

Early steam engines also deteriorated rapidly due to their lack of lubrication.<sup>44</sup> The machinery was expected to be below the waterline to minimise damage in war which meant that compact, high performance engines were needed. It was very difficult to build small two cylinder engines capable of turning a huge two-blade screw. The shallow draught required by gunboats meant that they often needed two screws rather than one. This was unpopular at the time as the screws were not usually hoistable and thus slowed the vessel under sail. Successive new classes of gunboat increased the power of their engines and the size of guns carried e.g. the Beacon class released in 1868 had two 60 horse power engines, one 7 inch gun, one 64 pounder and two 20 pounder Armstrongs. In 1873 the Cape and West Africa station had one gun vessel (HMS *Bittern*) and three gunboats (HMS *Coquette*, *Decoy*, *Merlin*).

The development of armoured hulls meant that more powerful guns were needed to fire through them. In 1860 the Armstrong rifled, breech loading cannon was introduced into the Royal Navy. Despite the £2.5 million pounds spent on the Armstrongs their breeches blew off and their shells failed to pierce armour. In 1865 muzzleloaders were reintroduced. They were poorly rifled which caused their shells to wobble in flight and therefore made them inaccurate but they were far more reliable and continued to be used for 15 years.

## 2) The International Nature of the Slave Trade

The slave trade was a truly international enterprise. Slaves were procured in the interior of Africa and were shipped to North and South America, Asia and in the early days to Europe. The slave traders came from every country in Europe and the New World, as well as the Middle East and India. Because of this the campaign against the slave trade involved all of the countries involved in the trade although it was led by the British. It is necessary to understand the relations between the various powers

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 89-92.

involved to appreciate the problems and difficulties the Royal Navy incurred as a result.

The British Government, although the dominant naval power of the time, had to negotiate with the other powers to be allowed to search their shipping which could have been involved in the slave trade. British, French and American anti-slaving squadrons were established on the West Coast of Africa in an attempt to control the trade. The British Squadron was established first but was soon followed by the French and American Squadrons as these powers feared that Britain would use her squadron to impose her influence in West Africa (under the guise of the humanitarian effort). Britain used diplomatic coercion and outright bribery (in the case of Portugal) to attain treaties to search the smaller powers' shipping. A later development was the addition of an equipment clause to these treaties under which a ship could be seized if she was outfitted for slaving and not only if she had slaves on board. France, America and Turkey refused to allow Britain to search their vessels as they felt this would be a violation of their sovereignty.

Many of the slaves sold on the West Coast of Africa came from African Kingdoms. These Kingdoms captured slaves through warfare or sold criminals into slavery. Slavery had allowed them to gain great power as the Europeans often traded guns for slaves. On the East Coast of Africa the slave trade was dominated in the nineteenth century by centres under the control of the Sultan of Zanzibar. To control the slave trade Britain needed also to negotiate treaties with these powers under which they would agree to halt the traffic. Britain established Sierra Leone as a refuge for freed slaves and her example was followed by the United States which established Liberia for the same purpose.<sup>45</sup>

Understanding the relations between the various nations involved in the slave trade and its suppression is of prime importance in grasping the complexities of the task

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<sup>45</sup> The 'Sierra Leone Plan' was launched in 1787 by abolitionists to provide a home for freed slaves from the British Empire. It became a full dependency of the Crown in 1808. Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 496-8.

Liberia was founded in 1823 as a home for freed US slaves. In 1847 Liberia declared herself a republic and was recognised by Britain in 1848. It took the US until 1862 to recognise her. Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 617,692.

which the British government assigned itself and the Royal Navy. The competition between nations to develop new areas of trade and influence in Africa were part of the great challenge the Royal Navy faced. The desire, on the part of France and America particularly, to protect the sovereignty of their countries led their governments to adopt policies which were at odds with their professed desire to end the vile traffic. These policies greatly hampered the British efforts to suppress the slave trade and there is no doubt that had there been greater cooperation in this regard the slave trade would have been curtailed far more successfully, earlier and at a far lesser expense.

In order to explore the international nature of the slave trade and the effect of world affairs on the traffic as well as the suppression of it I shall examine the following topics:

- 1) **The American Civil War**
- 2) **Liberia**
- 3) **The Portuguese Colonies in Africa**
- 4) **France**

#### 1) **The American Civil War**

Britain did not have the right to search American shipping for much of their campaign against the slave trade. The Americans had fought hard for their independence and it would have been political suicide for her leaders to be seen to be giving Britain control over their shipping.

The American West Coast Squadron was established to intercept and search vessels flying the American flag thereby avoiding the necessity of granting Britain the right to search American shipping (which was a very unpopular idea in the US) and as a means of curbing Britain's influence in the region. In May 1820, a new act prescribed the death penalty for participating in the slave trade and allowed the president of the US to order US Navy ships to cruise the American and African coasts looking for slavers. \$100 000 was allocated for these cruises. In 1820-21 five ships were

despatched to the West African coast. This action which took place under President Monroe was the US's first major action of international power.<sup>46</sup>

From May 1818 till November 1821, the US Navy captured 573 Africans from 11 ships. The ships were condemned but the masters and crew released. The US Navy made little more progress from 1821-39 due to a reduction in size of the squadron. During the 1840s the US Naval Squadron in West Africa grew in strength again and 28 slave ships were seized by from 1844-54 (mostly unladen). In the 1850s some trans-Atlantic slave trade to the US revived. A policy of joint cruising by the British and US patrols was ineffectual as there was a lack of communication between the two.

Repeated boarding, search and seizure of US vessels by the British Navy incensed the Americans with many calling for war. There were also calls in the US to revive the slave trade which received much support in the Southern States and southern press. The cotton industry was growing rapidly and New York was still heavily involved in the trade.

In 1859 the US moved their African Squadron headquarters to Angola and added four private steamers to the ships stationed there. She also stationed four steamers permanently off the Cuban coast. These were important developments as from 1841-59 only two ships laden with slaves were detained by the US Navy while in 1860 alone the navy captured 8 ships with over 4 000 slaves on board.

The US also started to use legal action to punish slavers. In 1860, an American captain Nathaniel Gordon was captured off Cabinda with 900 slaves aboard his ship. He was taken to New York, tried and hung. He was the only American executed for slave trading.

The outbreak of the US Civil War on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1861 caused the Northern States to withdraw their West African and Cuban Squadrons for service in blockading the

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 610-771; Ward, *Royal Navy and the Slavers*, 138-223; R.W. Beachey, *The Slave Trade of East Africa*, (London, 1976), 20.

Southern States' ports thereby stopping them from transporting reinforcements and goods.

### **The Confederate Flag and right of search**

In order to keep within their strict legal boundaries the British needed to resolve the issue of how to treat Confederate shipping as soon as possible after war broke out in April 1861. It was decided that Confederate vessels were to be treated as if they were US vessels.<sup>47</sup> This meant the Royal Navy was not permitted to board them or call for their papers. If a vessel flew the Confederate flag but possessed US papers she was to be treated as though she flew the US flag. If the vessel had Confederate papers (which under strict maritime law were not recognised by the British government) she was to be treated *prima facie* as though she possessed US papers (and could not be boarded or seized even if she had slaves on board.)

The Admiralty voiced concern over the continued co-operation of the anti-slave trade cruises jointly between US and Britain.<sup>48</sup> It was felt that in the event of encountering a Confederate slave trader a British ship assisting an American ship would be a violation of Britain's stated neutrality. Furthermore it was recommended that British ships not even inform American cruisers of a Confederate ship's presence as this too would be a violation of their neutrality.

The United States requested Britain to send a force into Cuban waters to intercept slavers. Britain responded that this was pointless unless the right of search was granted for US shipping.<sup>49</sup> On the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1861 the Admiralty in London received a memo stating that "British cruisers should overhaul any vessels which gave reasonable grounds of suspicion" and that fitting out of vessels for the trade would no longer be allowed in New York. The Federal Navy blockaded the Confederate coastline and there was thus no chance of an American slave trade revival.

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<sup>47</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A33, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1861.

<sup>48</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A150, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1861.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 775.

An incident in the Caribbean which became known as the Trent Affair greatly raised tensions between Britain and the Union States. A US warship, the USS *San Jacinto*, halted the British mail packet, *Trent*, near the Bahamas and forcibly removed the Confederate commissioners to Britain and France on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1861. They were interned at Boston. Understandably this caused a great outcry in Britain and for a while it seemed that Britain would recognise the Confederacy and declare war on the Union. British merchants were inclined to support the South as it was the source of most of the world's cotton. Lord Lyons managed to calm the situation down, the prisoners were released in January 1862 and war was averted.

A treaty was drafted between the two countries stating that:

- Britain and the US could search each other's merchant ships in the Atlantic. This was later modified to include the Indian Ocean.
- If the vessel was found with slaves on board or to be equipped for slaving she was to be taken to a mixed court in Sierra Leone, New York or Cape Town where they would be tried by a British and American judge.
- There was to be no damage for false arrests.

This treaty, which became known as the Washington Treaty, was signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1862 and conceded the mutual right of search to within 200 miles of the American and African coasts and 30 leagues of the Cuban Coast. This caused many slavers to move to Madagascar (which was more than 200 miles from the African coast). In 1863 this loophole was closed with Madagascar being included in African territorial waters.

Copies were forwarded to the Cape Squadron of the 1862 treaty giving right of search to British and American vessels within 30 leagues of Madagascar, Puerto Rico and San Domingo on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1863.<sup>50</sup> Admiral Grey expressed his hopes that France would soon do the same but this was not to be.<sup>51</sup> In effect the American Civil War had persuaded the Union government to at last give the Royal Navy the right to search their shipping (if only in designated areas). The Washington Treaty was a crucial victory in the campaign to end the slave trade at sea.

<sup>50</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1317, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1863.

<sup>51</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Grey to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1862.

## 2) Liberia

Liberia was founded in 1822 as a home for freed US slaves. In 1847 it declared itself a republic but many countries refused to recognise its independence. Britain recognised it in 1848 but its foster parent, the US, took until 1862 to recognise it. As a haven for freed slaves Liberia was keen to halt the slave trade in her territory. This task at sea was left to her tiny navy which consisted of the armed schooners, the *Quail* and *Lark*, both of which were gifts from Britain. When Liberia claimed the Gallinas, Mannah and Solymah regions as part of her territory Britain objected as she wished these to be included in her colony Sierra Leone. Liberia attempted to enforce her claims but was, as we shall see no match for Britain.

Two British vessels (*Emily* and *Phoebe*) had been forcibly released by HMS *Torch* after they were detained by the Liberian schooner *Quail* for non-compliance with revenue laws there.<sup>52</sup> The vessels were trading at Solyma which was claimed as territory by the Liberian republic. The Admiralty requested that a ship was sent to establish the full extent of the territory claimed by the republic. Neither vessel had their bulk broken (they had not started loading) and hence even if they were in Liberian waters no offence was committed. Mr Harris who owned the vessels claimed compensation of £15 per vessel per day which seemed reasonable to the commander of the *Torch* (19 days). Liberia insisted that the Gallinas region was within Liberia and that Harris had been involved in trade (even having built two houses for this purpose).

The Liberian government received information that a Spanish vessel had visited Solyma.<sup>53</sup> The vessel had landed five Spaniards together with a large number of doubloons for the purchase of slaves. Once this intelligence was gained the Liberian government immediately despatched the *Quail* to investigate and to prohibit further

<sup>52</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A73, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1861.

<sup>53</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 (contained in A73), W.G. Romaine to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1861.



discourse between the vessel and the slaves on land. It was during this 'blockade' that Mr Harris's two schooners were noticed and ordered not to proceed with their trade until they had complied with Liberia's revenue laws. The dispute broke down into a territorial argument with Liberia protesting its right to sovereignty of action. No satisfactory resolution seems to have been reached and there is no record of whether compensation was paid.

Some months thereafter a schooner without name, papers or flag was destroyed on suspicion of slaving after the Liberian government had taken possession of her as she was in Liberian waters (in the Gallinas region).<sup>54</sup> The Admiralty ordered that in future no interference was to be given to Liberian efforts to suppress the trade.

In September 1861 HMS *Torch* destroyed a vessel that was a prize of the Liberian vessel *Quail*.<sup>55</sup> Commander Smith of the *Torch* captured her while a prize crew was on board and the Liberian flag was flying. Smith claimed he had not the slightest idea that there was a Liberian prize crew on board and sent his apologies.

It was feared that the Spanish would attack Monrovia in retaliation for the seizure of a Spanish schooner by the Liberian gunboat *Quail*.<sup>56</sup> This was the same vessel seized and destroyed by Commander Smith of HMS *Torch* (the *Buenaventura Cubano*). A Spanish vessel (the war steamer *Ceres*) had approached Monrovia and opened fire on Liberian shipping (the *Quail*) without warning or Consultation with the authorities there. This was criticised as being "so utterly at variance with the conduct of civilised nations" that there was no doubt that the Spanish government would disapprove of the actions of her officers. In the actual event the Spanish authorities refused to condemn their ship's actions. They claimed that the *Buenaventura Cubano* was not involved in the slave trade and was driven onto a reef near the Gallinas river by a storm during her voyage from Tenerife to Fernando Po. The Spaniards regarded the event as piracy and there was question over whether the Spanish government recognised the independence of Liberia. The Spanish argued that there were no treaties governing

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<sup>54</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A258, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>55</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A316, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1861.

<sup>56</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A571, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 21<sup>st</sup> February 1861.

right of search between the two nations and that the whole affair was illegal. They therefore felt that the *Ceres*'s actions were justified. Britain agreed with the Spanish.

The Spanish Government claimed that the ship was a legal trader.<sup>57</sup> The British Government requested any further evidence that the ship was involved in the illegal trade. The captain of the *Buenaventura Cubano*, Calderon Collantes, assumed that the only evidence of his ship's involvement came from the word of a native chief, neglecting to remember that there was also a signed statement from Commander Smith of HMS *Torch* (which stated that the vessel had been found fully equipped for the slave trade). The Spanish and Liberian crews' stories of the capture were at variance and the Spanish government preferred to believe their own subjects.

The matter appears to have been peacefully settled and there is no further record of it in the despatches. I find the incident interesting as it is a good example of how Liberia was bullied by the far more powerful European states. It also shows the confusion that often resulted from the dispute over territory and Britain's insistence on treaties for the legality of a seizure. The triangle of power (or conflict) between Liberia, Britain and Spain shows how governments became involved in disputes far from their areas of influence (in the case of Spain). There is no record of Spain complaining to Britain of her vessel's destruction of the Spanish ship. It also shows how little value was attached to the word of the 'native chief'.

### 3) The Portuguese and the Slave Trade

The British and Portuguese had long been allies. Portugal was very much the lesser partner in the relationship however and Britain used her dominance to bully Portugal into doing what she wanted. She had managed to persuade Portugal to ban the slave trade through a series of 'loans' and expected Portugal to act to curtail the trade.

Portugal reacted by paying lip service to Britain's demands while actually doing very little. The Portuguese colonies were always very poor and the temptation for officials there to accept bribes was great. Portugal's policy of exiling slave traders to Mozambique did not help either.

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<sup>57</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A805, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1862.

## Mozambique

The Mozambique coast is over 2 000 miles (3 200 km) long and the Portuguese administration was very run down and had poor defences. Portugal had to pay off the local people to avoid being overrun. They suppressed legitimate commerce with the Arabs and thereby encouraged the slave trade. In 1811-12, James Prior surgeon of HMS *Nisus* estimated that 10 000 slaves were exported annually from the Isle of Mozambique at that time (bound for South America and the Indian Ocean Isles). From 1815-30, 10 000 slaves were exported from Mozambique to Brazil annually and a further 7 000 went to the Indian Ocean Islands. By 1837 the number exported to Cuba and Brazil had reached 15 000 per annum.<sup>58</sup> Large numbers of slaves were used to develop prazeros (plantations) inside Mozambique as well.

The Portuguese East African Atlantic slave trade developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>59</sup> Prior to 1810 the Portuguese exported some 10-12 000 slaves from Mozambique to Brazil, India and Madagascar annually.<sup>60</sup> By the 1820s slaves were Mozambique's largest export. In 1824 fifteen slavers, each with 500 slaves on board left East African ports for Brazil.<sup>61</sup> Slaves from Mozambique were felt by the Brazilians to be of a better class than those from the West Coast, especially Angola. They consisted of many different peoples, often having been marched to the coast from deep in the interior.<sup>62</sup> By the 1820s harbours from Point Uniacke in the South to Zanzibar in the North were shipping as many slaves as any other region. Approximately 10 000 were exported per year during the 1820s, a figure which had risen to 30 000 per year by the 1840s, mostly from Mozambique. The East African trade was considered of secondary importance until the West African trade subsided. In 1829, the slave trade made up 55 percent of the revenue from exports in the region. The British-Portuguese treaties of 1815 and 1817 (making the slave trade south of the equator legal) greatly expanded the Mozambique slave trade. The British Consul in Mozambique estimated that an average of 4 590 slaves were exported from the isle of

<sup>58</sup> Beachey, *Slave Trade of East Africa*, 13.

<sup>59</sup> J. E. Inikori, *Forced migration: The impact of the export slave trade on African societies*, (London, 1982), 243.

<sup>60</sup> A. Gupta. 'Suppression of the Slave Trade and British imperialist strategies' in U. Bissoondoyal. *Slavery in the south-west Indian Ocean*, (Mauritius, 1989), 370.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 594.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 706-8.

Mozambique annually during 1818-30. This is probably an underestimate. Accurate figures are far harder to come by after Brazil made the slave trade illegal in 1830-1.<sup>63</sup> These are estimates from one Mozambique slaving port (the capital). Slaves were also shipped from Quelimane, Inhambane, Ibo and Delagoa Bay. After a royal Portuguese decree permitted the direct shipment of slaves to Brazil, Quelimane and these other ports grew very fast. In 1806, ivory and gold accounted for 57 percent of Quelimane's exports with slaves making up 17 percent. By 1821, ivory and gold made up only 7 percent of exports while the slave trade's share had soared to 85 percent. An estimated 12-15 000 slaves were exported from this port by 1827. Quelimane and the Isle of Mozambique were the chief slaving ports for the Brazilian slave trade while the French trade was centred on Ibo. By the 1840s Angoche had become an important slaving port. It was under the Swahili leadership of the Sultan of Angoche. The growth in the trade there (and British criticism) embarrassed Portugal. In 1846 and 1850 joint expeditions (Portugal and Britain) were mounted against the Sultanate. Despite these Angoche remained independent until 1861 when she was defeated by the Portuguese. Other major slave ports were the River Angoche and Sofala (at the mouth of the Zambezi). Mozambique also supplied the Indian Ocean Islands with approximately 250 000 slaves in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>64</sup> Hindu merchants (Banyans), Arab traders and the Portuguese were all involved in the trade from the region. Corrupt colonial officials turned a blind eye to the traffic or were in some cases actively involved in it.

By the mid-nineteenth century Portugal's presence in Africa was at a low point.<sup>65</sup> This was caused by misadministration, disease, lack of adequate legitimate commerce and the large traffic slaves. Angola was the largest supplier of slaves to the new world for many years. Mozambique was administered as part of the Portuguese Eastern Empire until 1752 and was important due to the port at Mozambique Isle and the *prazeros* (plantations) of Zambezia. After the collapse of Portugal's Eastern Empire Mozambique became important only as a source of slaves in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The British reaction to Portuguese slave trading in the illegal era was typical of the relations between the two countries. Britain attempted to intimidate Portugal into

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<sup>63</sup> Inikori, *Forced migration*, 247-51.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 707.

<sup>65</sup> J. Duffy, *A question of slavery*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967), 1-4.

accepting their point of view and the British people felt morally superior to the Portuguese. By 1850 the slave trade to Brazil was almost halted. Treaties signed in 1839 and 1842 were used by the Royal Navy to curtail the trade in Angola and Mozambique and to promote legitimate commerce. The traffic within the Portuguese colonies continued unabated however. David Livingstone noted that Portuguese officials were so poorly paid that they had no alternative but to supplement their income by involvement in the trade. The profit from this involvement was a far greater temptation than the risk of sanction from enlightened officials in Lisbon could counter.

The attitudes of British naval officers and colonial officials to the Portuguese can be divided into two categories. The first were inclined to be sternly moral, philanthropic and inflexible. They felt that the Portuguese ruthlessly exploited Africans.<sup>66</sup> The second group was tolerant and flexible. They felt that Africans were savage and childlike and that any white power was justified in dealing harshly with them.

There were short periods of enlightenment in Mozambique such as when in 1846 the governor of Quelimane was removed for corruption. His successor escaped prosecution by fleeing on a ship filled with slaves. The next governor, Captain Duval managed to bring an end to the slave trade for fifty miles on either side of Quelimane for a short period.<sup>67</sup> After 1840 the Portuguese Navy had a small presence in the region with a brig and two schooners. They did stop some ships but were generally ineffective and were not taken seriously by the slavers.

The East African trade started to diminish after 1840 as a result of British action and the new attention that was being paid to it after the decline of the West African trade. The governors of Mozambique granted the Royal Navy the right to pursue all slave ships along the coast and to destroy slave barracoons at will after 1843, powers they never had on the West Coast. The slavers reacted by purchasing their cargo from areas outside of Portuguese control such as Zanzibar, Muscat, Comoro Islands and Western Madagascar. Eastern Madagascar had prohibited the trade in 1817 through a treaty with the British but Madagascar (East and West) continued to export 3-4 000

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 708-11.

slaves annually throughout the nineteenth century. Some of these went to the Indian Ocean Islands e.g. Mauritius, others to the Americas, especially Cuba. The Cuban vessels carrying slaves from East Africa were larger than those from the West due to the rough seas around the Cape of Good Hope. The passage from East Africa to the new world was especially trying for the slaves as it took much longer (60-70 days average as opposed to 25-30 days for Angola-Brazil and 45 Days from Benin-Caribbean) and they suffered from the cold and storms around the Cape. During the 1820s 15-18 Brazilian vessels arrived at Mozambique Island annually and would each load up with about 500 or more slaves each meaning that approximately 10 000 were exported per year. The long and arduous journey sometimes caused a mortality rate of fifty percent but this was compensated for by the lower purchase price of the slaves. After the 1830s Cuban ships too started to arrive and the number exported rose to about 15 000 annually. Another 10 000 were said to be exported annually from Quelimane.

Slave ships arriving in Rio de Janeiro from Mozambique outnumbered those arriving from Angola in the period 1825-30.<sup>68</sup> Most arrived from November to January due to the prevailing winds from the Cape. Ships from Mozambique needed to stop to re-provision with water and food due to the increased distance of the journey. British anti-slave trade efforts stopped them calling at the Cape and greatly increased mortality rates. Some ships took to stopping at Benguela, Sao Tome and Principe instead but as this greatly increased their chance of detection and further slowed the voyage many sailed straight across the Atlantic. From 1822-23 ships sailing from Rio to Africa comprised 22.5 percent (114 out of 506) of Portuguese ship movements. Rio traders sent silver to Mozambique which was then sent to India to buy Asian textiles (to trade for slaves) The under financed American slave trade greatly increased deaths amongst slaves as the traders could not afford to purchase enough food and water for the journey.

In 1847, Portugal gave permission for Royal Navy ships to enter Mozambican ports, bays and creeks in search of slave ships.<sup>69</sup> Commodore Wyvill of the Cape Command

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<sup>68</sup> J. C. Miller, *Way of death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730-1830*, (Madison, 1988), 323-509.

<sup>69</sup> Beachey, *Slave Trade of East Africa*, 19.

sent Commander Bunce in HMS *Castor* to sweep the coast near Ibo. He sent HMS *Brigantine* and HMS *Penguin* to patrol the Mozambique Channel. Special attention was given to the Angoche River area as it was an important centre for the export of foodstuffs and slaves, and possessed barracoons capable of holding 4-5 000 slaves. Commander Bunce burnt barracoons, punished local chiefs, destroyed villages and dispersed Arab slave traders after seizing their stores. E.g. At Masani over 100 slave traders were dispersed and £40 000 in goods seized. The Royal Navy's efforts were hampered by a lack of vessels. The Crimean War monopolised the Admiralty's attention and thus in 1854, Commodore Talbot had only 3 vessels with which to patrol from Delagoa Bay to Zanzibar. The slave traders were well informed of the movements of cruisers and could easily avoid them.

In the early 1850s the slave trade in Mozambique shrank due to Brazil halting the trade in 1851 and Portugal thus being able to enforce her 1836 abolition for the first time.<sup>70</sup> The French free labour system, which began in 1854, greatly expanded demand again causing a shortage of slaves in Mozambique and a rise in prices. These shortages caused the local tribes to raid each other and much desolation resulted. Slave trading people, such as the Yao, moved towards the coast where they continued to trade in slaves, ivory and iron hoes. Large areas of land in the interior became depopulated.<sup>71</sup> Slaves continued to be shipped from remote areas such as the island of Pemba which were protected by shallow reefs and waters from men of war.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Inikori, *Forced migration*, 257.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>72</sup> Beachey, *Slave Trade of East Africa*, 59.



Angola 1860-1910

(Map from Duffy, *A Question of Slavery*, 231)





East Africa

(Map from Beachey, *The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa*, 308.)

#### **4) France:**

France and Britain had been bitter rivals for hundreds of years. Defeat during the Napoleonic wars had cost France much prestige and she desperately clung to what remained of it and her independence. She had initially abolished slavery in 1794 but it experienced a revival under Napoleon. The restoration of the Bourbons (Louis XVIII) to the throne in France after the overthrow of Napoleon gave the British a fresh opportunity to tackle the question of the slave trade. Thus under the First Treaty of Paris, which was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1814, France agreed to join Britain in doing everything possible to suppress the slave trade. Abolitionists were unhappy with the vague nature of the terms of this treaty, and specifically with the return to France of most of her colonies and the 5 year period that Louis XVIII agreed to abolish the trade in.<sup>73</sup>

In November 1815, Britain, France, Austria, Russia and Prussia signed the Second Treaty of Paris. These powers agreed to abolish the slave trade in its entirety. There had been no sailings of slavers from France since the peace but when the British seized three French ships off the coast of Africa there was a huge public outcry in France. This swayed public opinion so much that in 1816 no less than 36 ships left French ports on slaving missions. In 1817 a Royal Navy ship seized a French slaver which resulted in the French ship being condemned. On appeal to the Admiralty Court in London, the judge ruled in favour of the French ship stating that there was no legal justification for the seizure. This unfortunate incident forced the Admiralty to order their naval officers not to search French ships. This was another major stumbling block in the efforts to control the slave trade and was only resolved many years later.

Problems emerged between the US and France over the seizure of French ships. In 1817 the French government announced that any French or foreign vessel importing slaves into French colonies would be confiscated. She made no mention about the French traffic to other nations though and declared that she would police her own slave trade. In March 1818 the slave trade was declared illegal in France. After this the traffic changed into a clandestine one. The slave traders had powerful allies

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 582-7.

however and the number of slave ships doubled from 1818-19. An estimated 763 illegal slavers were fitted out in French ports from 1814-31.<sup>74</sup> Seventy of these were seized by the Royal Navy of which sixty were condemned. At least fifty three slavers were bound for Bourbon from 1821-33.

A French naval patrol was established and was based in Senegal. Its purpose was as much to counter the British influence in West Africa and to establish a French presence there as to control the slave trade. The patrol was ordered only to visit French ships and was thus ineffective. French public opinion turned against the slave trade and the size of the French squadron was increased to six ships. From 1823 to the end of June 1825 eleven vessels were condemned. Corruption and connivance between the French Navy and the slave traders (30 of whom were previously in the French Navy) hampered enforcement efforts.<sup>75</sup>

It is estimated that from 1814-33 a sixth of the long distance trade from the French port of Nantes was involved in the slave trade. From 1825 onwards French crews were to be rewarded with 100 francs for every slave they freed. In 1826, a special commissioner was sent to Nantes to investigate the trade and slavers. In 1827 slave traders were declared criminals. From 1830 attempts to trade in slaves were punished in the same way as actual slave trading. Slave merchants were to be imprisoned for 2-5 years if their ships were caught in France and 10-20 years if caught on the high seas. If caught with slaves these sentences were to include hard labour. Captured slaves were to be transported to the American colony they were destined for and given their freedom there. The British and French agreed to a mutual right of search between the essential latitudes. If either suspected that the other's merchant ships were trading in slaves, a warrant was to be granted to allow search of the vessel. In 1832 the French granted the British 22 such warrants and the British issued the French with 15. There was no equipment clause included in these treaties so a slaver had to be caught laden with human cargo to be condemned. Despite these advances problems remained. The Royal Navy could not detain a ship that hoisted the French flag without a specific warrant. The only course of action that could be taken was to send a boat to check the validity of the Frenchman's papers.

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<sup>74</sup> Scarr, *Slaving and Slavery*, 113.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 622-702.

France refused to ratify the Quintuple Treaty of 1841 (Britain, France, Russia, Prussia and Austria) that declared the mutual right of search and that slavery was piracy. This strained relations between the two countries on matters other than the slave trade.

The French bought land at the mouth of the river Gabon in 1842 and in 1843 established a fortified post there. In 1849, Libreville was established with some freed slaves. France officially abolished slavery in 1848 but it continued in her colonies for many years in one form or another.

Despite many negotiations between Britain and France they never signed a reciprocal right of search treaty.

### **British and French Competition in Africa:**

While the British (and French) may have been ordered to cooperate by their governments, there was still great competition between the two nations. The French ran their colonies very differently to the British as is evidenced by the following report from the British Governor of the Gambia.<sup>76</sup>

French Forts on rivers in Senegal provided protection to British traders (against pillage by the locals) in return for a small tax. Once this tax was paid the traders were exempt from further taxes which were normally imposed by the local chiefs (which were often very heavy). Fear was expressed by some Britons that the French would come to dominate on the West Coast through their habit of sending their best officers, naval and military, to the coast. The Governor of The Gambia (British) expressed his amazement at the difference in behaviour between the French who worked really hard in West Africa and the British who often drank themselves to death in a few months.

The French settlement at Senegal was impressively outfitted. They had at least 12 war steamers (all less than 300 tons, gunboats from the Crimea and well suited to river work) based at Fort Senegal. There was a large hospital with 400 beds and a large

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<sup>76</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A30, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

garrison with European officers and artillery as well as trained mules. The French governor was greatly feared as the leader of over 40 victorious military expeditions. An electric telegraph from Gorce to Senegal was planned for which the material had already arrived.

The French colonial policy was to conquer the local people and give them protection in return for tribute. The French guns stopped parties of Moors (Arabs) from raiding local people as they had done for centuries before.

Senegal's revenues totalled £20 000 and her costs £160 000 (including the pay of troops, maintenance of the colony and ships) and the colony therefore ran at a loss of £140 000 per annum.

Her main exports were live cattle, hides, wax, gum, ground nuts, cow horns, gold and ostrich feathers. Senegal's ground nuts were of a better quality than those from the Gambia as they were hand picked as opposed to being threshed as they were in the Gambia (which contained sticks and stones). This process of handpicking was very labour intensive, labour which the French procured through their *engagé* system.<sup>77</sup>

The Governor concluded his report by stating that although Senegal was militarily and culturally better than the Gambia, the Gambia did far more trade. The French who were more interested in aggrandisement were losing a great deal of money. The Gambia had one small unarmed steamer, 300 black soldiers and did 20 times the trade of Senegal (which had 2500 men and European officers). He recommended that the most economical course to follow in exploiting the Gambia was to pay river chiefs customs quarterly and in the event of pillage to pay the customs to the trader until he was indemnified.

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<sup>77</sup> The French free emigration or *engagé à temps* system was meant to allow colonists to procure indentured labourers. This system caused much controversy as although the labourers were technically free on the Mascarenes they left Africa as slaves and hence inspired the slave traders. The British complained to the French about the system but the French refused to halt it until the British allowed them to recruit 'coolies' in India. Lovejoy, *Transformations*, 220-2.

## The French in the Indian Ocean

The French East India Company traded to all the Indian Ocean coastlines between Mozambique and the Bay of Bengal for slaves, rice and Madagascan cattle.<sup>78</sup> They are believed to have begun the Mozambique trade that attracted Brazilian slavers around the Cape from Angola as well as Spanish and American slavers supplying Cuba. Most of these transactions took place through Arab and Portuguese middlemen. They also maintained palisaded posts in Madagascar trading rice, cattle and slaves for gunpowder, firearms and sometimes silver. Britain was very conscious of the growing French influence in the region and attempted to halt further French advancement into areas such as Zanzibar.

After Britain was awarded Mauritius and the Seychelles from France in the peace settlement of 1815 the slave trade continued to supply new workers. There were allegations of involvement of members of the British Vice-Admiralty court who were accused of protecting their own interests. This court was to prove ineffectual as there was no mechanism for ensuring that the fines they imposed were paid. Slavery was officially abolished in the Seychelles and Mauritius on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1835. The Royal Navy supplied many prize slaves as apprentices to both colonies. From 1861-1872, 2 532 apprentices were released from Arab dhows on Mahe in the Seychelles.

The French *engagé* system was widely used to supply France's remaining Indian Ocean colonies of Bourbon, Mayotte and Nosy Be. This system caused the Royal Navy and Foreign Office many headaches as it was believed to be encouraging the slave trade and was impossible to curtail without the right of search of French shipping. There is much evidence in the Royal Navy record of French colonial officials' complicity in this quasi legal traffic.

In this section we have seen how world affairs and the relationships between nations influenced the way in which the Royal Navy attempted to control the slave trade. If it were not for the US civil war the US might never have granted the right of search. France's fierce independence meant that she and Britain's relationship was far from

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<sup>78</sup> Scarr, *Slaving and Slavery*, 16-200.

constructive. Britain's bullying of Portugal and Liberia turned public opinion against her in these countries. In summary, Britain's place in the nineteenth century world as the arrogant superpower made her job of curtailing the slave trade that much more difficult.

### **3) The State of Slave Trade Suppression in 1861**

#### **The Slave Trade versus legitimate trade**

A key aspect of the British policy to end the slave trade was the substitution of legitimate enterprises for the illegal traffic. This involved for the most part the establishment of plantations in Africa which would provide produce and products which were in demand in Europe and the new world. The policy was most effective in West Africa which was far better known to Europeans as they had been trading there for centuries. Over the centuries that the slave trade had been the main commerce of Africa the revenue and goods provided had led to the growth of powerful African states. The earlier commerce in gold had dwindled as reserves were exhausted and the greater profits from slaving took over. In order to control the slave trade the British entered into a series of treaties with the African kings and undertook military expeditions to force them to comply with British wishes.<sup>79</sup>

Plantations were established to produce palm oil, ground nuts and gum copal. These plantations were for the most part worked by slaves but the British tended to overlook this fact. Beeswax, kola nuts and ivory were other products which could be 'harvested' and which turned a tidy profit. Although there continued to be regions of Liberia and parts of the western Ivory Coast where slavery was marginal, for the most part the social transformation that was occurring in the region included a mode of production based on slave labour.<sup>80</sup> This new demand for slaves greatly aided in absorbing the surplus numbers which were arriving at the coast and could not be exported due to the increased effectiveness of the Royal Navy's (and to a lesser extent

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<sup>79</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 562-3.

<sup>80</sup> Lovejoy, *Transformations*, 159-162.

those of the American and French Squadrons') suppression efforts. In so doing the income from the new plantations helped to stabilise the economies of the larger states which had previously been heavily dependent on slave exports. The maintenance of stability in the region required Europeans to overlook or even support slavery unless public opinion became aroused by this injustice which for the most part it did not. Slaves were also used to transport 'legitimate products' to market.

The maintenance of order and a semblance of economic prosperity in African States were as I have said of primary importance to the Europeans, including the British. The British for their part were reluctant to extend their empire into Africa at this point and hence while pressuring African States to curtail slavery they ignored domestic slavery. Even in areas under their control the British were reluctant to disturb the *status quo*. Thus slaves were only freed in Sierra Leone in 1928 although the area had been under British control for over 130 years.

The development of a plantation economy in Zanzibar and the nearby island of Pemba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century greatly stimulated the demand for slaves.<sup>81</sup> These plantations produced cloves for the most part. The value of a plantation was estimated by the number of slaves working on it. Other areas which developed plantations were the 110km stretch of coast from Mtwapa to Mambrui and the coast opposite Lamu and Pate. These plantations grew a variety of crops including grain, coconuts, oil seeds (including sesame), gum copal and other foodstuffs.<sup>82</sup> A series of revolts in the 1890s destroyed many plantations, allowed many slaves to escape and badly damaged the economy. Mission stations in many cases harboured runaway slaves and refused to return them to the plantations. Instead they were used to develop mission lands and were hired out as porters. The introduction of railways meant that caravans were less important and allowed new merchants to move inland who in many cases replaced the traditional trading systems.<sup>83</sup>

The British delayed the outlawing of slavery in their East African Possessions as they felt they needed to suppress the revolts there first, were worried about the impact it

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<sup>81</sup> A. Salim, 'The impact of the abolition of slavery on the Kenyan swahili coast' ... in U. Bissoondoyal, *Slavery in the south-west Indian Ocean*, (Mauritius, 1989), 74.

<sup>82</sup> Lovejoy, *Transformations*, 220-5.

<sup>83</sup> Salim, 'The impact of the abolition', 76.



would have on the African economies and were reluctant to pay compensation for freed slaves. In September 1907 an ordinance was passed which came into effect on 1 October 1907 and declared that all slaves were automatically free but with the provision that concubines were not slaves. The children of concubines were to be free and have the same rights as children of wives. This was meant to minimise the effect on Arab households. By the end of April 1916, 7 683 slaves were freed which was less than half the number estimated to exist. Few high ranking Arabs claimed compensation as they were offered so little money and wished to be spared the humiliation of cross examination in front of their slaves. The freed slaves were inadequately catered for and suffered greatly. The loss of slave labour caused many plantations to become overgrown. When the Land Titles ordinance (1908) was passed it was in many cases impossible to tell which land had been cultivated and many people lost land which they had been cultivating for years. This 'abandoned land' was distributed amongst white settlers.

The colonial powers for the most part felt that African slavery was tolerable and felt that abolition would result in a decrease in production which could cause hardship even to the slaves themselves as it had in parts of the Caribbean.<sup>84</sup> They were fearful of provoking the resistance of the elites who controlled the plantations and upsetting African social structures. "They soon realised that their aim – the economic exploitation of Africa – did not require mass liberation of slaves."<sup>85</sup> This was typical of the British (and other European) attitude towards abolition. The development of market economies was of paramount importance to the administrators with the rights of slaves being of secondary importance. The Royal Navy's campaign against the slave trade was thus at all times a compromise between economic expediency (as enforced by the treasury and Admiralty) and the humanitarian concerns of so many of the participants.

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<sup>84</sup> Miers & Roberts, *The End of Slavery in Africa*, (Madison, 1988), 47-59.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

## The slave trade and legitimate trade in West Africa

When Baldwin Walker began his tenure as Admiral at the Cape the slave trade was still very much active in West Africa. When the American Squadron was withdrawn as a result of the US civil war it was feared that the trade would experience a great resurgence. This did not happen however due to the right of search of American vessels being granted to British ships and the efficacy of the naval blockade on the southern ports.

When Admiral Keppel handed over control of the station to Walker he gave him the following report on the slave trade in West Africa.<sup>86</sup> I have summarised it as follows:

From the 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1860 no less than 46 vessels capable of conveying 30 432 slaves either arrived on the coast or were on their way from the western ports. The Royal Navy captured six vessels capable of conveying 2 940 slaves. Some 1 112 slaves were rescued as four out of the six vessels were empty. The American Squadron captured four vessels during the same period which were sailing under the protection of their flag and freed 2 925 slaves.<sup>87</sup> Thus almost a quarter of known slavers on the coast were captured.

Five vessels with 3 097 slaves on board managed to avoid capture. Keppel remarked that especially pleasing was the American contribution which he felt did more to curtail the trade than if twice the number were captured by the British Squadron. The squadron boarded six American vessels and one French which because of treaty obligations (or lack thereof) they could not detain.

Keppel, Walker's predecessor hoped that with the development of the legal timber and palm oil trades slaving would greatly decline. The trade was still prevalent in the bights, especially in Dahomey's territory where three notorious slavers had escaped capture laden with large cargoes. All three were on the suspected list. In Dahomey,

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<sup>86</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE53, Commodore Wilmot to Admiral Keppel, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1860.

<sup>87</sup> America and France were unwilling to allow the Royal Navy the right to search their shipping and therefore maintained their own squadrons on the West African Coast.

slaving had eclipsed legitimate trade due to King Gelele having many captives for the purpose of commemorating the anniversary of his father King Gezo's death with human sacrifices.<sup>88</sup>

Slaves were sometimes kept in barracoons but were increasingly scattered amongst the huts to appear as domestic slaves. The slave traders were mostly based at Whydah, with Senor Madeiras (a Spaniard) at Ahgwey and Senor Limas (Brazilian) at Quietta Fort. Keppel recommended that a number of cruisers be sent to patrol the area, both British and American (which were most active on the South coast near present day Angola).

While at Loango with HMS *Arrogant* (Keppel's flag ship) some of the officers inspected the 'French Emigration Establishment' with the French Governor making no objection to their visit. There they found three hundred 'free emigrants' awaiting shipment. It was also reported that American vessels disguised as whalers had resumed the traffic from Benguela.

The West Coast Division (part of the Cape Squadron<sup>89</sup>) was itself divided as follows:

#### **North Division**

HMS *Torch* (senior officer)

HMS *Falcon*

#### **Bights Division**

HMS *Alecto* (senior officer)

HMS *Ranger*

HMS *Espoir*

HMS *Bloodhound*

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<sup>88</sup> King Gelele acceded to the throne in 1858 at age 38. His elder brother, first in line to the throne, was superseded as he had developed a heavy reliance on the strong liquor imported by the European traders. Richard Burton, *A Mission to the King of Dahomey*, (London, 1864), 407-10.

<sup>89</sup> The boundaries of the Cape Squadron varied considerably over time. During Walker's tenure it encompassed both the West and East Coast of Africa. The West Coast Station was previously an independent and important squadron and would return to being so after Walker's departure.

## South Division

HMS *Archer* (senior officer)

HMS *Prometheus*

HMS *Wrangler*

HMS *Sharpshooter*

## The Slave trade and legitimate trade in East Africa and Zanzibar

When Walker assumed command of the station he received a detailed briefing of the state of the East African slave trade from the Consul in Zanzibar, Colonel Rigby. I have summarised the briefing as follows:

The suppression of the slave trade on the East coast of Africa had been an objective of British policy for the previous twenty years but Rigby felt that his experience of how prevalent the trade still was showed that there had been very little success in suppressing it.<sup>90</sup> He believed that the treaties signed between Zanzibar and Britain were regarded as a “dead letter” from the day they were signed and were hence very ineffectual. He believed that of the thousands of slaves imported annually into Zanzibar at least half were exported to foreign countries in violation of the treaties.<sup>91</sup> In addition to those, several thousands were taken annually from the Portuguese dominions, the river Lamu and Kilwa northwards to Arabia. He felt it was only in the previous few years that the vessels which carried these slaves had been engaged solely in the traffic, an indication of the increase in demand and of the profit to be gained from the trade. Previously dhows would carry a few slaves in addition to their other cargo but more and more large dhows were carrying upwards of 200 slaves each in traffic distinct from normal trade. He gave as an example the dhow captured shortly before by HMS *Sidon* which had 273 slaves on board.<sup>92</sup> This increase in the numbers of slaves carried led to a deterioration in the conditions on board and an increase in

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<sup>90</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A346, Payot to Walker, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1861.

<sup>91</sup> N. Bennet, *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*, (London, 1978), 62-70.

<sup>92</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A346, Payot to Walker, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1861.

the mortality rate, sometimes to as much as 50 percent. In 1840, the British representative in the Persian Gulf estimated that some 4-5 000 slaves were sold annually there and that about 100 vessels were involved in the trade. Despite the treaties that had been signed a minimum of 10 000 slaves were transported north annually in the 1860s and more than 150 vessels were employed solely in the traffic according to Rigby. Rigby believed that at least half these slaves were shipped from Zanzibar with the full knowledge of the authorities. A report from the Indian government quoted stated that the slave trade would continue until it was made unprofitable for the slave dealer and harsher penalties were imposed and enforced.

Captain Hamerton in a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 1841 estimated that 8-10 000 slaves were imported into Zanzibar annually at a duty of \$1 per head. By 1860, Rigby estimated the number imported had more than doubled and the duty had been raised to \$2 per head which meant that the revenue raised was of great importance to the Sultan. On arrival at Zanzibar the slaves were often in so poor a state that they were allowed to expire on the boat they arrived in to save the two dollars a head duty. The annual arrival of the Northern Arabs (pirates) who kidnapped and took many slaves by force which the Sultan was unable to halt meant that there was little that negotiations with the Sultan could do to help. Rigby stated that he believed that every Arab other than the Sultan on Zanzibar was involved in the trade. Slave vessels often anchored under the windows of the Sultan's palace and loaded their cargo in full view without any attempts at concealment.

When Rigby asked the Sultan what steps were being taken to stop the northern Arabs in their annual slave trade he was told that the slave market would be closed during the north-east monsoon and that the Sultan's frigate would be stationed to the north of the harbour to allow only legitimate traders to enter and leave the harbour. In practice however, the slave market carried out business on a daily basis outside of the town and the Sultan's frigate was so short of crew that she was unable to inspect a single dhow during the whole season. These efforts Rigby felt were merely paying lip service to the British government's wishes. If the northern slave trade could be halted, the drop in demand for slaves would make the interior trade unprofitable as the Arabs on the east coast of Africa were becoming annually more impoverished (due to their 'vices' and the diseases engendered by them!) and could not afford to buy slaves.

More and more property was passing into the hands of the British Indian merchants or Banyans (who were prohibited from owning slaves) through collateral for bad loans.

HMS *Lyra*<sup>93</sup> and *Sidon*<sup>94</sup> together captured 25 vessels during 1860-1. Rigby believed that strong action the following year would put a halt to the northern traffic. Two gunboats stationed at Zanzibar during March and April and again during September and October would, he felt, entirely halt the northern trade and force the Arabs to find another more profitable form of commerce. Zanzibar was an ideal location for a naval base due to the presence of the British Consul there and of so many British Indian subjects who were engaged in trade at every place along the coast. In 1860 it was estimated that not even one percent of the slaves transported northwards were captured by the British Cruisers. Officers of the Indian Navy had to detain dhows and take them to Bombay for adjudication where the officers would lose their command allowances and were thus reluctant to do so. Officers of the Cape Station however were permitted to destroy dhows and were thus spared the inconvenience of detaching officers and crew from their vessel. Another reason for condemning the practice of adjudicating the case in Bombay is the increase in suffering which it meant for the unfortunate human cargo. He felt that the captured slaves were more easily “disposed of” at Mauritius, the Seychelles and Port Natal than if taken to Bombay.

It was felt that if the trade was suppressed completely it could have a negative impact on Zanzibar’s economy.<sup>95</sup> This was due to the fact that the female slaves there seldom reproduced and that the available labour pool would thus decrease rapidly over time (due to the high mortality rate) This could be avoided if once the plantation owners realised their plight they began taking better care of their slaves and thus decreased the number of deaths. Furthermore according to Colonel Rigby there was abundant free labour available on Zanzibar (no doubt including some of the released prize slaves). The European and American merchants there were already using large numbers of free labourers to clean gum copal, cowries, curing hides and so on. A large free labour market could thus be expected (hoped) to develop with mainland

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<sup>93</sup> HMS *Lyra* under the command of Commander Oldfield from mid-1858 to October 1862 (when he assumed command of the *Ariel*) captured 63 dhows with 358 slaves aboard. Howell, *Royal Navy*, 45.

<sup>94</sup> Captain Crawford and HMS *Sidon* captured 23 dhows with 264 slaves on board. Howell, *Royal Navy*, 45.

<sup>95</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A32, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

Africans voluntarily seeking work there once they were sure of their continued freedom and of receiving decent wages. The argument that such a treaty would infringe on the religious freedoms of the Arabs was believed to carry little weight as the precedent set by the Viceroy of Egypt (who had banned the fresh importation of slaves) showed. A more serious threat was posed by a revolt amongst the population against the Sultan's rule if such a decree were implemented. With this in mind it was suggested that any such prohibition be slowly implemented (e.g. over 3 years). In reality of course the prohibition of slavery led to the abandonment of large plantations which were later awarded to British settlers as 'unused' land. The duty on slaves made up a large portion of the Sultan's income for which a substitute needed to be found (such as compensation being paid by the British Government). Any further settlement needed the support of France and the US government to ensure that 'free labour' practices did not replace the slave trade and that they showed a united front against the trade.

The "piratical tribes" from Oman annually smuggled large number of slaves northwards from Zanzibar to Arabia.<sup>96</sup> They landed their armed crews on Zanzibar and seized any domestic and other slaves they could find.<sup>97</sup> These 'visits' coincided with the monsoon season from November to March. During this period the Zanzibar residents would send their children and slaves inland to avoid them becoming part of the 4 000 odd carried away a year.<sup>98</sup>

The emancipation of some 5 500 slaves belonging to British Indian subjects in Zanzibar<sup>99</sup> shortly before was believed to have convinced the Arabs that slavery was a dying institution and had prepared them for the end of the slavery. Nevertheless the customs house at Zanzibar showed slave imports for 1859 to be 19 000. The duty on this amount would have been 38 000 crowns or £8 500.

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<sup>96</sup> These included the Suri and members of the Wahabi sect.

<sup>97</sup> Bennet, *A History*, 67.

<sup>98</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A32, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

<sup>99</sup> This is often regarded as Rigby's crowning achievement while Consul of Zanzibar and brought him widespread renown amongst the British public. He had taken the action unilaterally and at great personal risk. This took place in early 1859. C.E.B. Russel. *General Rigby, Zanzibar and the Slave Trade*, (New York, 1970), 140-2.

Rigby recommended that each vessel was provided with an officer who was fluent in the native language as the practice of using native interpreters was open to abuse.<sup>100</sup> Native interpreters, Rigby felt, were inclined to be bribed and often were not disposed to discriminate between a dhow's real crew and those slaves being passed off as such. A speedier way of adjudicating as to the validity of dhow captures would inspire the men in command by relieving much of the toil of the current bureaucracy. Delay in such cases at the time was sometimes over two years which must have been incredibly frustrating. Rigby felt a steam gunboat should be stationed at Zanzibar during January, February and March to assist the cruisers in suppressing the trade. The knowledge that such a vessel was present would deter many in Zanzibar from shipping slaves and would lend courage to the efforts of the Zanzibari soldiers to control the northern Arabs (who they greatly feared at the time). Having a light draught, such a vessel would be able to chase dhows close into land and prevent the crew from throwing their slaves overboard and drowning them to avoid capture which was common practice at the time. By negotiating the end of the legal slave trade both within and out of the Zanzibar dominions the Royal Navy's task would be made far easier (the report goes so far as to declare the suppression of the external trade impossible while the internal trade was allowed)

A Foreign Office report recommended the constant presence of a cruiser at Zanzibar due to the huge slave trade in the vicinity.<sup>101</sup> Walker was instructed to maintain a cruiser in the vicinity which could perform this function as well as keep an eye on French actions in the region.

## **Rigby's allegations against the Portuguese and French**

Rigby alleged that an extensive trade was being carried out at 12 degrees south with the full knowledge of the Portuguese authorities there both to supply *engagés* and the South American demand. Two clipper built slavers had been taken in the previous 4 months with Spanish colours. One in the Mozambique channel by HMS *Brisk* with

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<sup>100</sup> From a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 1860 from Aden enclosed in MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A32, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

<sup>101</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A32, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1861.



864 slaves on board (taken to Mauritius.) and the other taken by HMS *Lyra* after failing to find a full cargo of slaves in Mozambique and had proceeded north to Zanzibar's African territories.

Rigby suggested that the Cape Squadron be strengthened with sufficient steam vessels to patrol the entire Mozambican coast from Cape Delgado to Delagoa Bay. Johanna was recommended as a northern base for the cruisers and the British possessions south of Delagoa Bay as the other. The Southern Base, Rigby felt would be a good trading base with the Zulu Kingdom and Transvaal as well as a good point to offload captured slaves. Rigby believed that increasing the colonial officials' salaries in Mozambique would go a long way to ending their connivance with the slavers. Slaves were carried in French and American built ships sailing under the Spanish and Mexican flags.

A large clandestine trade was carried out by square rigged (western ships). In 1857 the brig *Venus* arrived in Zanzibar and sailed for Lamu where she embarked 5-800 slaves. The principal agent was one Buonaventura Mass who was to become notorious over the years. During another shipment, of the original 424 slaves embarked at Kilwa more than 225 died on their journey to Lamu from where they were destined for Reunion. In February 1860 Rigby received information that the French ship *Pallas* embarked 600 slaves again supplied by Mass. Mass had purchased 200 of these from Suliman bin Abdullah and the rest from the brother of the Zanzibar Sultan, Majid. In July of the same year, the *Formosa Estella* arrived off East Zanzibar from Havana under Spanish colours. It was inspected by a French naval ship and found to be equipped for slaving. The slaves who had been purchased for the vessel were freed by Sultan Majid after Rigby informed him of their destination. The vessel escaped after the French Consul, M. Cochet warned her captain of the approach of HMS *Lyra*. Rigby complained to the Foreign Office about Cochet's action and the French government after initially retorting with accusations against Rigby removed him.<sup>102</sup> The *Lyra* again found the *Formosa Estella* and chased her to Lamu<sup>103</sup> where she was captured by the Sultan's vessel the *Iskunder Shah*.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Russel, *General Rigby*, 169-172. M. Cochet had caused a scandal amongst the foreign residents at Zanzibar with the goings on in his private life and behaviour towards the Sultan. His replacement Derché pointedly avoided meeting Rigby when he arrived.

A few days later HMS *Lyra* captured another Spanish vessel again with a charter signed by Mass.<sup>105</sup> Mass escaped Zanzibar reportedly for Lamu, where he was to continue his speculations and await a further 5 slavers the next season. Rigby discovered that Vidal Frères of Marseilles were the owners of the *Formosa Estella*. Enraged by such French involvement in the traffic Rigby was somewhat comforted by the news that Mass had been forced to leave the Sultan's dominions and retire to Aden.<sup>106</sup>

Rigby accused the French and Zanzibar representatives of collusion in the traffic. The treaties already signed gave all ships of the Royal and Indian Navies permission to seize any vessel, property of the Sultan or any of his subjects engaged in the slave trade outside of Zanzibar and his African dominions and needed to be strictly enforced. Rigby believed that a small steamer or two small schooners stationed near Ras el Hadd and Mugeira Island and a similar guard in the Persian Gulf would halt the northern traffic.

It was feared that the treaty with the US and the occupation of Lagos would give fresh vigour to the European East African slave trade.<sup>107</sup> Portuguese and Spanish influence was felt to be bad in this regard.

Rumours of aggressive French designs on the East African Coast were prevalent.<sup>108</sup> Information from Mauritius showed that the French intended to use their force in China to take Madagascar. Preparations for this were underway on Bourbon, Mayotte and Nosy Be. They were also greatly increasing their presence in Zanzibar, having procured what was supposed to be a Catholic mission but as the costs far exceeded the justifiable ones any such claims were likely to be false. The 'mission' consisted of a house large enough to hold 1 500 men (including the grounds) which was rented for 1

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<sup>103</sup> Howell, *Royal Navy*, 24.

<sup>104</sup> Russel, *General Rigby*, 88-9.

<sup>105</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A32, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

<sup>106</sup> Russel, *General Rigby*, 169-173.

<sup>107</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XI, A.H. Layard to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1862.

<sup>108</sup> Letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> December 1860 from Bombay enclosed in MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A32, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

000 crowns per annum. The French had brought in carpenters, blacksmiths and other mechanics who had no place in a mission, school or hospital.

Captain de Horsey of HMS *Brisk* commented in 1861, “The French slaving is very bad. It is very unpleasant to be obliged to let their slave dhows go by under one’s very nose. If the matter is strongly represented the French government must take notice of it.”<sup>109</sup>

## **Madagascar:**

Madagascar had long been a refuge for pirates and slavers. It is a huge, fertile island with a large population and was very close to the French colony of Nosy Be. As such it was an important source of slaves. Of great concern to the British was the encroachment of French influence there. The principal trading post on the East Coast of this island was Tamatave with other minor ones such as Port Dauphin, Vahewar and Autongil also playing a role.<sup>110</sup> There were numerous other places where small coasters called but the above were more frequently visited by European and American vessels. Nearly the entire trade of the east coast was monopolised by the residents of Bourbon and Mauritius, and nine tenths of the exports left from Tamatave. The most important export was bullocks of which Mauritius consumed 11-16 000 annually and Bourbon 5-6 000. Rice was exported to the amount of a thousand tons. Two shiploads of timber, about ten tons of beeswax and a small amount of gum copal and hides completed the list of exports from Tamatave. The exports were estimated at £70-80 000 and the imports valued at £30-40 000 per annum. There were nine or ten English vessels and two French vessels (one of which was a steamer) involved in the bullock trade. Port Dauphin was at the time closed to trade as the Hova had been at war with the French who were besieged in the fort and had to be garrisoned from the sea. The French were said to have shipped some 2000 captives of war as *engagés* from the bay of St. Luce. There were several fine harbours on the west side of the island and some trade was conducted from Bembatooka Bay and the surrounding bays to Zanzibar and

<sup>109</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XI, Captain A. de Horsey to Walker, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>110</sup> MSS, BC356 A4.1, Commander Wilson to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

Bombay by the Arabs. The French had several trading posts along the coast. Besides them there were Americans and Hamburgers (Germans) who exported a considerable quantity of beeswax, ebony and other valuable produce (which was shipped via Zanzibar where there were larger ships). The Arab trade was principally in rice and slaves with the latter being exchanged for the former. The slaves were not carried in large numbers but rather in small shipments allowing them to be passed off as part of the crew.

University of Cape Town

## **2) The Cape Squadron under Admiral Walker's command**

In this section I examine the period (1861-1864) when Baldwin Walker commanded the Cape Squadron. I begin with a brief biography of his eventful life and attempt to explore the conditions and experiences which led the Cape Squadron to achieve great success during his tenure as Commander in Chief. I give a description of his interest in naval technology and the improvements he made at Simonstown. I follow this with an account of the squadron's attempts to suppress the slave trade both on the East and West Coast of Africa during this period. Thirdly I examine the squadron's relations with the French and Portuguese during this time. Finally I explore the actions which the squadron took part in not directly related to the slave trade during his tenure. These include colonial administration and protection and his encounter with the notorious Confederate Raider the CSS *Alabama*.

### **A brief biography**

Baldwin Walker K.C.B., Baronet lived an interesting and exciting life. A Royal Navy man throughout, he enjoyed postings to all parts of the world and during his career bore witness to many of the defining moments of the period. As he rose in rank he gained great influence and made many important friends but also enemies.

He was born Baldwin Wake Walker at Port-e-Vullen, near Ramsey, in the United Kingdom on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1802.<sup>111</sup> He was the son of John and Frances Walker. Frances Walker (nee Wake) was the daughter of Captain Drury Wake of the 17<sup>th</sup> Dragoons and the niece of Sir William Wake, eighth baronet. This noble lineage no doubt helped Walker to advance steadily in his career as during these times advancement beyond a certain rank was extremely difficult without the patronage of an influential man.

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<sup>111</sup> (from dictionary of national biography via <http://www.ee.ac.uk/contrib/manx/fulltext/p145.html>).

Walker entered the navy in 1812 at the age of ten. He was a midshipman from 1815-9 and was made a lieutenant in 1820 when only eighteen. He served on the Jamaican Station for two years and was then posted to the South American and West African Stations for a further three. During this time he cruised the coastline of West Africa, gathering valuable experience in the practicalities of the suppression of the slave trade. In 1827 he was sent to the Mediterranean in HMS *Rattlesnake*. In 1828 he was the first Lieutenant on HMS *Etna* during the reduction of the Kastro, a famous fortress in the Morea (modern day Greece).<sup>112</sup> For his part in this action Lieutenant Walker received the crosses of the Legion of Honour and of the Redeemer of Greece.

After this notable action he continued to serve in the Mediterranean, serving first in HMS *Asia* and later in HMS *Britannia* and HMS *Barham*. He was finally promoted to commander in 1834 after he had served as a lieutenant for 14 years. This long period during which his career lay stagnant may be attributed to the vast over supply of naval personnel, particularly officers, subsequent to the Napoleonic wars. He was in fact fortunate to have kept his commission. He served as commander in HMS *Vanguard*, still in the Mediterranean, between 1836 and 1838.

In 1838, by permission of the Admiralty, he accepted a commission in the Turkish Navy. This move provided an opportunity for action and advancement during an otherwise quiet period.<sup>113</sup> He was known to the Turks initially as Walker Bey and later as Yavir Pasha. He attained the rank of captain. During this year, a war between the Ottoman Empire (Turks) and Egypt under its viceroy Mohammed Ali began. The Turks were resoundingly defeated by the Egyptians at the battle of Nezib in 1839. In July 1840 Capitan Pasha (the Ottoman Admiral) led the Turkish Fleet to Alexandria where he handed control of it to Mohammed Ali (Ali was famous for his skill at

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<sup>112</sup> This action took place during the Greek War of Independence against their Turkish overlords (1821-33). The Kastro was one of the major Ottoman strongholds in Eastern Greece. Russia, Britain and France were initially neutral in the conflict but the Allied powers annihilated the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Navarino (20<sup>th</sup> October 1827) after one of their vessels was attacked by a Turkish ship. After this battle the Allies became involved in the conflict and used their naval supremacy to devastating effect greatly hastening the Greek victory and independence in 1833. Interestingly a large proportion of the Turkish force was comprised of troops supplied by Mohammed Ali, the Turkish Viceroy of Egypt. Walker was later involved on the Turkish side in their battle against Ali after he rebelled against the Sublime Porte. D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence 1821-33*, (London, 1973), 91-235.

<sup>113</sup> The British (who had previously supported the Greeks against Turkey) supported Turkey at this point in an effort to maintain her as a buffer against further Russian advancement in the region.

corrupting the enemy). Walker is credited with summoning the Turkish captains to a council of war where a surprise attack was planned whereby Ali would be captured and carried off to Constantinople. Before he could put his plan into action however Ali relinquished control of the fleet. By this time Britain had entered what was to become known as the second Anglo-Egyptian war (1839). Turkey was saved from total defeat by the intervention of Britain and a coalition of European powers excluding France. The Europeans wished to ensure the survival of Turkey as she provided a safe bastion to their east. Walker afterwards commanded the Turkish Squadron during the reduction of St Jean D'Acre.<sup>114</sup> For this service he was nominated and awarded a K.C.B. in 1841 as well as receiving decorations from each of Austria, Russia and Prussia.

Walker returned to England in 1845. He took up command of HMS *Queen* and served as the flag captain of the Admiral Sir John West. In 1846-7 he commanded the frigate HMS *Constance*, serving in the Pacific. He returned to England and was surveyor of the navy from 1848-60. During this period he cultivated his keen interest in naval technology and design, including overseeing the construction of the first iron hulled, armoured battleship in the world, HMS *Warrior*. The construction of the *Warrior* began as a response to British fears of French naval expansion and the construction of their ship the *La Gloire* which could outmanoeuvre and outgun any British vessel at the time.<sup>115</sup> The *Warrior* was by all accounts a great success (although she only served for twelve years before being outdated and withdrawn from active service) and stands today as a museum ship at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.<sup>116</sup>

Surveyor of the Navy was a position which wielded great influence on the pursuance of naval policy and Walker made many influential friends but was not universally liked. At one stage the sum of £5 million pounds (an immense sum of money for the time) was said to have vanished from the naval treasury during his tenure. Walker was accused by some powerful people of having been negligent in his duties and somehow to blame for its disappearance. Other important people leapt to his defence but the scandal continued for some time with a letter received from George Evans as late as 1862 confirming his support for Walker's position that it was merely an accounting

<sup>114</sup> This involved the destruction of a fortress close to the modern day border of Israel and Syria.

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.hmswarrior.org>.

<sup>116</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, The Duke of Somerset to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1862.

error and relating how Bernal Osborne had attacked the Secretary of War for not apologising to Walker for his unfounded slander.<sup>117</sup>

Walker was made a Baronet in 1856 and a Rear Admiral in 1858. Towards the end of his tenure as Surveyor of the Navy Walker's health began to decline. In 1861 he was appointed as Commander in Chief of the Royal Navy Squadron at the Cape of Good Hope. His appointment came at a time when the strategic importance of the station was growing and his experience and competence were to be of great value. The climate of the Cape it was felt would also improve his health.

Walker retained his great interest in naval design while at the Cape as is shown by the correspondence relating to this interest. The Council of the Institute of Naval Architects unanimously elected Walker as an honorary associate in consideration of his distinguished services as surveyor and controller of the Royal Navy. The position carried no responsibility but was recognition of his long and valuable connection with naval architecture.<sup>118</sup>

Walker returned to England in 1864. He became a Vice-Admiral in 1865. In 1866 he was appointed Commander in Chief at Sheerness. He became an Admiral in 1870. He died at his home at Diss in Norfolk in 1876.

Baldwin Walker married Mary Catherine Sinclair and they had five sons and four daughters together. Walker was a strict father with at least one of his sons joining the Royal Navy at the age of six. Correspondence between a General Douglas and Walker touches on his son's progress including the unfortunate matter of him wetting his hammock repeatedly.<sup>119</sup> Another example of Walker's strictness is the letter he received from one Lieutenant Adeane, apologising profusely for the letter he had previously sent to Walker after his love affair with Florence, Walker's daughter, and Walker's rejection thereof. He promises to "force his way on in the service" which suggests that Walker had hurt his chances of advancement in some way.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>117</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, George Evans to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1862.

<sup>118</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XIII, E. J Reed to Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1862.

<sup>119</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder V, General Douglas to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

<sup>120</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVII, Lieut. Adeane to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1864.



Walker was a great Royal Navy man. His career was the epitome of Royal Navy success and was no doubt the envy of many others.



Walker or Yavir Pasha whilst in the Turkish Navy.  
(Portrait from MSS BC356)



A young Baldwin Walker  
(Portrait from MSS BC356)





Admiral Walker at the Cape. 5(411)



Lady Walker. 5(410)



A young Miss Walker at the Cape.  
1 (4)



Lady Walker and daughters on horseback at the  
Cape. 1 (15)

(Photographs from NLSA collection. Cloete Albums 1 & 2.)

## **Baldwin Walker's life at the Cape**

Walker was officially informed of his appointment as Commander in Chief of the Cape Squadron on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1861.<sup>121</sup> He was to hoist his flag on board HMS *Narcissus* and proceed to Ascension Island via Sierra Leone.<sup>122</sup> At Ascension he was to meet Sir Henry Keppel (his predecessor as Commander-in-Chief) and assume control of the squadron. Keppel was posted to Rio de Janeiro to command the South American Squadron.<sup>123</sup> He was ordered not leave Ascension for the Cape until the latest orders had arrived there.<sup>124</sup>

Communications were of course very slow at this time and the fastest method was for a telegraph to be sent to Gibraltar and carried from there by ship to Sierra Leone and on to the Cape (via Ascension and St Helena). This cumbersome method, although as efficient as was possible with the technology and infrastructure of the time caused a great deal of inefficiency in the execution of orders.

Sir Henry Keppel was not happy to be replaced and enquired from the Admiralty as to the reason for his transfer. The Admiralty declined to comment and refused to give him a reason for his replacement by Walker.<sup>125</sup> Walker was far more influential having been serving as Surveyor of the Royal Navy for the previous twelve years and this influence may have secured his appointment as was common during this period. The orders sent to Keppel to meet Walker at Ascension arrived after he departed and he thus returned from Ascension to the Cape. The Admiralty expressed its hope that Walker had been informed of Keppel's movements.<sup>126</sup> Another set of orders were sent to Keppel, this time to the Cape, that he was to proceed to Ascension again and there meet Walker and hand over control of the squadron. Keppel was then to proceed to

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<sup>121</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A15, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

<sup>122</sup> Ascension Island was an ideal rendezvous point as it is roughly halfway between Sierra Leone and St Helena, the important naval base which once held Napoleon in captivity.

<sup>123</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A29, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

<sup>124</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A48, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1861, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1861.

<sup>125</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A53, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1861.

<sup>126</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A56, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1861.

South America where he was to assume the command of the South East American station based at Rio de Janeiro.<sup>127</sup>

Walker arrived at the Cape and began to petition the Admiralty for more ships and better facilities.<sup>128</sup> This was common practice for the Commander in Chief, but Walker seems to have achieved more success than most of his predecessors although nowhere near every request he made was granted. The first evidence of the success he achieved in this regard was the assigning of HMS *Pantaloön* to replace HMS *Wasp*, and another vessel (name unspecified) to replace HMS *Cossack*.<sup>129</sup> Both of the vessels to be replaced were slow and outdated, and too cumbersome successfully to chase and capture the often swift and modern slavers. The *Pantaloön* was not to achieve much success and had to be taken to Bombay for serious repairs after running aground on a cruise along the East African coastline (as described in detail in a later chapter).<sup>130</sup> This was indicative of one of the greatest difficulties facing the Royal Navy, particularly along the East Coast, where the waters were to a large part uncharted and there were many treacherous reefs.<sup>131</sup>

Walker's influence was not so great however that all his requests were granted. A letter sent to the Admiralty (Baldwin's letter no.157 of September 1862) in which he stated that the vessels assigned to the East Coast squadron were not of sufficient strength to control the slave trade and to perform their other duties was rebuffed.<sup>132</sup> The Admiralty replied that the squadron was the same strength as it had been for many years and that the ships assigned to it were all efficient and they therefore could not see why they need assign more ships to it. They also opposed the idea of transferring ships from the West Coast Squadron. They did however request more information about the cases of the full slavers which had managed to escape capture.

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<sup>127</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A64, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1861.

<sup>128</sup> Walker arrived at Simonstown on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1861. Keppel finally departed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1861. National Library of South Africa (hereafter NLSA), Cape Argus (hereafter MP1001), 21<sup>st</sup> May 1861.

<sup>129</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A290, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>130</sup> The *Pantaloön* ran aground on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1861 and was only floated again on the 12<sup>th</sup> February after a heroic effort by her crew.

<sup>131</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Sir F. Grey to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1862.

<sup>132</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A896, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 31<sup>st</sup> October 1862.

Walker was informed that when he relinquished his command, the Cape Station was to be joined with the East Indies Station and the West Coast Station was to be separated (with the boundary on the West Coast to be 20°S).<sup>133</sup> Commodore Wilmot was to be in command of the West African Station and was ordered to meet Walker at Ascension when Walker was relieved in early May 1864.

Admiral King was to assume command of the East Indies Station.<sup>134</sup> His command was to include India and the Cape. King expressed his pleasure at relieving Walker but feared that his salary would be insufficient without the extra income from prize money (Prize money from the capture of slavers would be allocated to the commodore at the Cape).<sup>135</sup> Admiral King was ordered to proceed to Simonstown in HMS *Princess Royal*.<sup>136</sup> Walker was to place HMS *Valorous*, *Rapid*, *Orestes*, *Lyra*, *Seringapatam*, *Penguin* and their tenders under King's command. Once this was achieved Walker was to proceed in HMS *Narcissus* to Ascension where he was to transfer control of the West Coast Station to Wilmot in HMS *Rattlesnake*. Walker was assured that there was no intention of relieving him of his command before his three year posting expired. Walker was to relieve Admiral George Grey at the Admiralty. Grey was to assume command of the Mediterranean Station for the next three years.

There was to be a second class commodore at the Cape with one division permanently stationed there. This meant that HMS *Valorous* or another vessel was to be permanently stationed at the Cape. Commodore J.H. Cockburn was to be the first to command the Cape division of the East Indies Station.<sup>137</sup>

During his tenure at the Cape Walker displayed a keen interest in all matters legal. To this end he explored the boundaries of the legal power which his position offered. Upon enquiry as to the legal procedure to be followed, Walker was authorised to convene a court martial at the Cape when he saw fit in order to account for losses to HM ships.<sup>138</sup> He was however cautioned that an acting commander (really a lieutenant) could not sit as a judge and that the Commander-in-Chief of a squadron

<sup>133</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1582, Admiralty to Walker, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1864.

<sup>134</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Walker to Sir P.G. Wodehouse, 26<sup>th</sup> December 1863.

<sup>135</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder V, Admiral Sir George King to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> November 1863.

<sup>136</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1627, Admiralty to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1864.

<sup>137</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Sir F. Grey to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1864.

<sup>138</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A18, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

consisting of more than five ships could not head the court. In reply to another of Walker's queries this time as to the precedence of the Naval Commander-in-Chief at the Cape over the judges of the Supreme Court there it was decided that as the justices had offered Walker precedence he could take it if he wished but that the matter would need to be renegotiated with the appointment of a new Chief Justice.<sup>139</sup>

Under Walker's command the squadron was very successful in curtailing the slave trade. He expanded and modernised the dockyard at Simonstown (which I deal with later) and allowed his captains enough leeway for them to be effective in their duties. He had the respect of those under his command and was well liked. Shortly before departing from the Cape he received a letter from Captain Forsyth of HMS *Valorous*. In this letter Forsyth wrote "I can assure you that there is not a person in or out of the service (but one) who looks back to your leaving but with the deepest regret. They one and all often speak of you and Lady Walker's kindness and attention to them, which has made a deep impression."<sup>140</sup> This letter I feel presents an accurate summary of Walker's relationships. He was well liked by most, but not all of those under his command.

## **The Cape Squadron, Baldwin Walker and Naval Technology**

The Royal Navy of the 1860s was in a state of change. Still numerically superior to any other navy in the world, individual ships from France and the United States were able to outperform and outgun any vessel in the British fleet. The introduction of armour plating led to the need for the development of more powerful, particularly armour piercing projectiles.

Baldwin Walker had developed a keen interest in naval design while Surveyor of the Navy from 1848-60 and maintained this interest while at the Cape. Not only were his ships experiencing the problems that commonly beset the Armstrong guns but were putting other naval technologies such as copper bottoms to the test in the most demanding of environments.

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<sup>139</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A714, John Henry Briggs to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1862.

<sup>140</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder II, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1864.

It was generally felt at the time that Britain's pre-eminence in naval power needed to be maintained and enhanced. It was commonly accepted at this point that iron ships were superior to those made of wood. As Admiral Stopford somewhat sarcastically remarked in a letter to Walker it was at last accepted that iron makes a hole in wood "which I recollect was the case when I was at school"<sup>141</sup>. His opinion was seconded by that of Sir William Bowles who believed that the duel between the *Merrimac* and a whole American Squadron had resolved the issue (the confederate *Merrimac*, an ironclad had routed an entire squadron of union wooden ships during the civil war).<sup>142</sup> Admiral Elliot wrote to Walker enthusing about iron ships and heavy guns which seemed to be the popular topic of the moment.<sup>143</sup>

Sir Bowles wrote to Walker again detailing how the number of armoured ships was increasing. The French were trying out their armoured vessels in rough waters with "curious results" Admiral Grey attempted the same with HMS *Prince Consort* and nearly lost her.<sup>144</sup>

Great respect was afforded to Walker and his opinion on matters relating to naval design. Admiral Dennan believed that if Baldwin's comments were heeded there would be no difficulty in maintaining naval superiority.<sup>145</sup> Walker had recommended that Britain build three iron ships for every two France built in his submission of the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1861 and this evidence was quoted in John Parkington's evidence before the Parliamentary Commission of 1861.

Walker was kept informed of developments by a number of different sources as we can see. Captain George Willes wrote that he had seen the French ironclads and that there was only one iron ship amongst them.<sup>146</sup> The rest were wooden with an iron casing. He believed that the best French ships were the best on either side of the channel and were the *Solferino* and *Magenta*. They were 276 feet long and had rifled, breech loading guns. In comparison the most advanced British vessel HMS *Prince Consort* was a terrible sea vessel as she could only use her guns in calm weather on flat seas. He described in detail the debate over few large guns vs. many smaller ones.

<sup>141</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder V, Admiral Stopford to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

<sup>142</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder V, Sir William Bowles to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

<sup>143</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder V, Admiral Elliot to Walker, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

<sup>144</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder 5, Sir William Bowles to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1863.

<sup>145</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder 6, Admiral Dennan to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1863.

<sup>146</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder 5, Captain George Willes to Walker, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1863.



The Duke of Somerset limited the number of guns to 50 smooth bore muzzle loading. He complemented Baldwin on the design of HMS *Warrior* and believed that if she was ironclad at the waterline she would be perfect.

The ships under Walker's command were a far cry from those about which he engaged in such excited correspondence. They were for the most part slow and cumbersome and ill suited to use in tropical waters with their shallow reefs and sandbanks. While most were equipped with steam engines, the limited supply of fuel meant that they had to use sail most of the time. The establishment of coal depots was a costly exercise especially on the East Coast with its limited shipping and small squadron and in the Admiralty's eyes a waste of money.

The tremendous advantage afforded by modern propulsion was shown by the following example. HMS *Griffin* captured a slave schooner near Whydah on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1862.<sup>147</sup> She was found to be fitted out for the slave trade. She had no colours, papers or name but after questioning her crew revealed that her name was the *Catalina*. Commander Percy of the *Griffin* stated that he would not have been able to capture her using normal coal but luckily had patent fuel and wood on board which allowed the extra speed required to be generated. The prize was sent to Lagos for adjudication. Of course while coal was in short supply there can not have been much hope of acquiring patent fuel.

## The problems with Armstrong Guns

Some of the ships were outfitted with the notoriously unreliable Armstrong guns. The navy tried to remedy their faults (particularly the breech vents which were likely to blow off when fired). Thus in one instance vent pieces were sent for the guns which improved their reliability by 50 percent.<sup>148</sup> These helped to a certain degree but the guns were still far more unreliable than muzzle loaders (or France and Germany's breech loaders).

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<sup>147</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S595, Commander Perry to Edmonstone, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1862.

<sup>148</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A286, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

There were also problems with the Armstrong gun's fuses which once again the Admiralty tried to fix. Ineptitude on the part of the suppliers (or the navy) meant that the old type was sent again and the problem was promised to be fixed as soon as possible.<sup>149</sup> Of course with the distance from England as soon as possible probably meant three months from the time the problem was discovered.

In January 1864 a flaw was noticed in the powder chamber of HMS *Valorous*'s 110 pounder Armstrong gun. The Navy's reply to enquiries in this regard was that the flaw should be watched and that if it worsened the gun should be taken out of service.<sup>150</sup> This meant that the *Valorous*'s heaviest gun would be out of service greatly lessening her fighting strength.<sup>151</sup>

During target practice on HMS *Orestes* on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1864, with the gun raised at an elevation of six degrees, and the ship on an even keel, the gun drew two of the breeching bolts. On inspection they appeared to have been imperfectly clinched. The previous year the same 110 pounder Armstrong guns had proven to have faulty compression.

There was only one good report about the guns. The projectiles after several examinations were found to be in good working order without the slightest galvanic action.<sup>152</sup> Armstrong guns were more accurate and could fire further than any other gun the British had at the time. The metal technology of the time (which involved shrinking layers of cast iron onto the gun one after the next) was however unable to withstand the stresses of repeated firing.

The Armstrong Guns were withdrawn from service in 1865 and the Royal Navy reverted to muzzle loaders for the next 15 years.

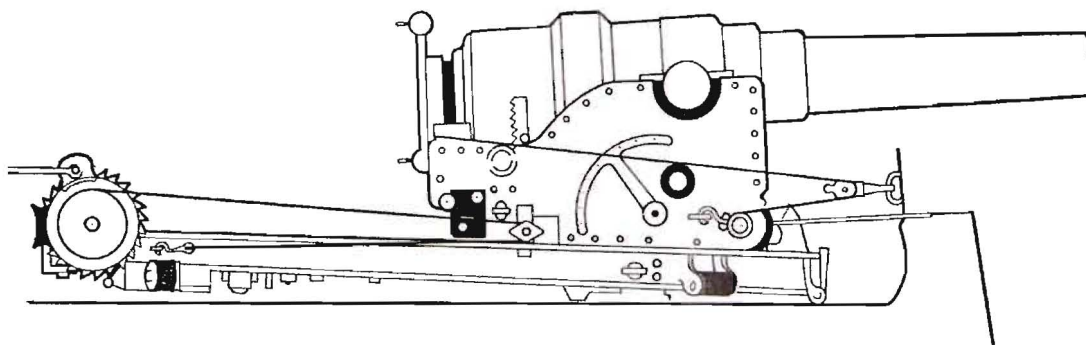
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<sup>149</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1477, Admiralty to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1863.

<sup>150</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1529, Admiralty to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1864.

<sup>151</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.5 S1116, Captain Alan Gardner to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1864.

<sup>152</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S419, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1862.



A 110 pounder Armstrong gun. (Preston & Major, *Send a Gunboat*, 208).

### Improvements at Simonstown

Walker's previous posting as Surveyor of the Navy had clearly given him experience in manipulating accounts and budgets in a manner so as to achieve the aims that he felt practical and which had not been officially sanctioned. This was shown by George Grey's comments, that he could "understand the improvements to Admiralty House except where the money came from."<sup>153</sup> He was not always successful in this however as the following example shows. Early in his posting he acquired a cottage but was reprimanded for using money allocated for a new coal store to do so. He was supposed to have requested assistance from the colonial government and the Admiralty felt unable to sanction this purchase as they were unable to justify it to the treasury.<sup>154</sup>

During his residence at the Cape Baldwin Walker undertook to modernise and improve the facilities at the Simonstown dockyard. To this end he procured a portable steam crane for use in the dockyard which enabled the process of loading and unloading vessels to be accomplished faster with less manpower.<sup>155</sup>

Another development during Walker's tenure was the construction of the Roman Rock lighthouse in False Bay (near Simonstown). This construction to some extent details the bureaucratic workings (and bunglings) which were part of daily life in the

<sup>153</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder V, Admiral A Drew to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>154</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Sir F Grey to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1861.

<sup>155</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1374, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1863.

colony. The old lighthouse on Roman Rock had fallen into disrepair and needed to be replaced. The governor at the Cape, P.G. Wodehouse, and Walker were jointly responsible for the planning and erection of the lighthouse.<sup>156</sup> To this end, estimates of the cost were prepared and forwarded to England for approval. Construction was unable to begin until approval was received which given the inefficiency of communication meant a delay of many months (and even longer if further negotiation was required). The plans were sent for approval to England in June 1863. The fact that there had been plans for the erection of a lighthouse for some time before are clear from Admiral Washington's unhelpful suggestion in March 1862 that the lighthouse be built on Robben Island instead of Roman Rock.<sup>157</sup> (Washington who was in England suggested that the lighthouse be built in Table Bay which is on the opposite side of the Cape Peninsula from False Bay and a day's sail away.) This suggestion was illustrative of the problems which the concentration of authority in the often ill informed Admiralty caused for the outlying posts.

The light house had also to be built as cheaply as possible with suggestions that the new structure be built around the old structure<sup>158</sup> and if possible for the upper part of the old tower to be moved onto the new base.<sup>159</sup> The old lighthouse was also to be kept running as long as possible. The governor expressed misgivings over who should supervise construction. He would have preferred to use an Admiralty man, Bourne, who had great experience in marine works, "were it not at the risk of offending this valuable Parliament".<sup>160</sup> (The Cape Parliament would no doubt have preferred a local contractor to have gained business from the construction).

The governor was to visit Simonstown to inspect the site and requested Walker to send the 'cart' to Kalk Bay to pick him up. He would proceed that far in his carriage but thereafter the road deteriorated badly and he therefore required alternative transport to be provided.<sup>161</sup> He had tried to send a message by telegraph to Simonstown but "as usual it did not work" and he had to write instead. The lighthouse was constructed and continues to stand in False Bay today.

<sup>156</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder X, J.F Bourne to Walker, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1863.

<sup>157</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Washington to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

<sup>158</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder X, J.F Bourne to Walker, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1863.

<sup>159</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, P.G. Wodehouse to Walker, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, J.F Bourne to Walker, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1863.

## **The Cape Squadron Suppresses the Slave Trade**

### **The Western Division**

When Commodore Wilmot arrived at Sierra Leone in HMS Rattlesnake to take over from Commodore Edmonstone in command of the Western Division of the Cape Squadron (on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1862) he expressed his satisfaction at being posted under as fine a man as Admiral Walker.<sup>162</sup> Wilmot was very zealous in pursuit of the African cause.<sup>163</sup> He arrived laden with gifts for the chiefs and full of Foreign Office views of subsidising chiefs. Commodore Edmonstone believed these methods were useless for putting down the slave trade as if the British tried to implement the agreements they had made with the chiefs it would cause a collision with them. The British were extremely patronising towards the African chiefs, believing they could buy their loyalty with mere trinkets. An example of this was the uniform complete with epaulettes sent to King Bonny of the Cameroons as a reward for upholding the terms of his treaty with the British.<sup>164</sup> The slave trade had provided huge incomes for some of the rulers of West African states, particularly Dahomey and Asante. King Gezo of Dahomey claimed to have an annual income of \$300 000 from the trade.<sup>165</sup> During negotiations with the British to end the slave trade in 1848 King Gezo had refused British offers of compensation and offered in return to send two slave girls to do Queen Victoria's washing. This flippant remark shows in what contempt the British offers were held by some of the recipients.

Wilmot reported that the Royal Navy had been successful in taking slavers off the West Coast and that the coast was well guarded. The Royal Navy's ships were in good order and the officers of exceptional quality. Walker was ordered to 'call upon' Commodore Wilmot and ascertain the specifics of the character of the slave trade

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<sup>162</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVII, Commodore Wilmot to Walker, 21<sup>st</sup> October 1862.

<sup>163</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVII, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1862.

<sup>164</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A60, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 16<sup>th</sup> March 1861.

<sup>165</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 697.

carried on in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone.<sup>166</sup> In Commodore Edmonstone's report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1862 he stated that the export of slaves in the north division of his station was decreasing fast, legal trade was increasing and domestic slavery was on the rise (no doubt to supply products for the legal trade).<sup>167</sup> Doubt was expressed whether any action could be effective against the supply of slaves for so widespread a practice as domestic slavery. HMS *Isis* was stationed at Sierra Leone for the purpose of allowing the cruisers to obtain the supplies they needed rapidly. She had previously cruised along the coast and her compliment (of seamen) was reduced with the number of Europeans employed as low as possible as she was no longer required to put to sea. This measure was meant to cut costs but also to minimise their exposure to the fever ridden northern station. The *Isis*'s boats needed to be furnished with the necessary authorisations so that they could be involved in the suppression of the traffic.

The custom normally observed of cruisers leaving their station to meet the mail packet gave great opportunity to slavers to evade capture as through their network of agents they were well informed of the cruisers movements.<sup>168</sup> In order to avoid this situation the following regulations were issued. When the mail packet arrived at Sierra Leone, the officer in charge of HMS *Isis* was to receive the mail packet and sort it into the different divisions placing those for the Bights and Southern divisions back on the mail packet again before she left. These mails would then be distributed by the commander of each division in a manner which minimised information passed onto spies.

Problems areas on the West Coast which had been identified were as follows:

### 1) **King Badiboo**

King Badiboo, a chief on the River Gambia had for years been a thorn in the side of the British. He was involved in the slave trade and refused to give in to British demands to curtail it. He was also a threat to British traders and thus in early 1861 the

<sup>166</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1250, Admiralty to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

<sup>167</sup> The export of slaves from this region had almost ceased during the 1840s. Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 682-3.

<sup>168</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S607, Commodore Wilmot to Walker, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1862.

men of the *Arrogant*, *Falcon* and *Torch* took part in an action against his forces.<sup>169</sup>

This action was commended by the Admiralty and Lieutenant Grubbe and acting mate Charles J Harford were promoted in recognition of their prowess (Grubbe was promoted to commander and Harford to acting lieutenant. Confirmation of Harford's appointment was to take place when he passed his exams at the Royal Navy College).

During the campaign against Badiboo, a slave girl ran into camp asking for British protection as warriors were descending from the interior and had erected a stockade for the purpose of holding slaves. On the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1861 the brigade advanced totally annihilating the enemy and burning the stockade. The British lost Lieutenant Hamilton of the *Arrogant* and three sailors. They had a further 34 sailors/marines and 2 officers wounded. There is no mention of the enemy's losses.

## 2) Niger

During this period the British attempted to open up the interior of West Africa by venturing up the Niger River. A naval vessel was ordered to escort the traders up the river, protecting them from interference from local chiefs who were inclined to charge high tariffs for allowing traders to pass through their territory. After a boat was attacked carrying stores to a trading post on the Niger River a Royal Navy vessel was ordered to investigate why the locals broke the treaty signed shortly before.<sup>170</sup>

The nearby island of Lagos was also to be occupied.<sup>171</sup> This was felt necessary to suppress the slave trade on the Bight of Benin as well as to lend support to the development of legitimate trade there. It would help control the aggressive nature of the King of Dahomey who gave great encouragement to the slave trade there. This was to be achieved without any injustice to Doceno, the present chief of the island, who had been a friend of the British for many years. The Royal Navy were further ordered to explain to Doceno that this step was not taken because of dissatisfaction with his behaviour but rather as a step to ensure that his people were protected from slave traders and kidnappers for ever. The British vowed to deal with him in a friendly

<sup>169</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A71, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1861.

<sup>170</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A155, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1861.

<sup>171</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A208, Charles Eden to Walker, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1861.

and liberal way, even wishing to provide him with a 'pension' from the revenue generated on the Island. While it was felt that a small naval presence in the bay might be sufficient to enforce the British will, in order to maintain peace on the island some black troops might also need to be stationed there (which would be paid for out of the local revenue).

This action is typical of the attitude of the British. The chief, Doceno, was to be stripped of all his power and land and in return be paid a pittance by the British. The British colonial administration was loathe to spend taxpayers money and hence the costs of all development had to be borne by the territory being occupied. In practice this meant the local people and trade had to pay for the British occupation and the benefits it offered.

### 3) **Dahomey and Whydah**

An expedition under Captain Richard Burton was to visit the King of Dahomey in an attempt to negotiate with him on the issues of trade, both legitimate and the slave trade, and of his practice of human sacrifice.<sup>172</sup> Burton's visit was to confirm the friendly advances made during Commodore Wilmot's visit some months before.

Many shipments of slaves were taking place from Whydah one of the largest towns in Dahomey.<sup>173</sup> Known shipments had taken place in the *African* (July 1861), *Acorn* (December 1861) and the *Seaman* (March 1862). The *Porto Novo* was also reported to have shipped slaves but was boarded and found to be empty (which perhaps suggests transshipment). The *Porto Novo* was under heavy bond in Brazil. The earlier three were sailing under American colours. Other vessels may have got away unnoticed due to the necessity of keeping a vessel near Lagos as the troops that were meant to protect it had not arrived. HMS *Antelope* was away carrying the sick home. Once the American Civil War began another vessel was kept close to the major palm oil rivers and in communication with the Consul on Fernando Po in case there was a shift in diplomatic relations.

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<sup>172</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1268, Admiralty to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

<sup>173</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S452, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 16th April 1862.



Thus Whydah was often left unguarded and the slavers were able to remain near Whydah for some time without detection as they were well informed of the navy's movements. Commodore Edmonstone feared that the slave trade would increase as Dahomey had recently been on a slave hunt and had captured a large number of slaves in a town near Porto Novo. He believed that it was not possible to stop this traffic with cruisers and that direct action against the slave suppliers was needed. Another option proposed was a mosquito fleet which could patrol inside the lagoon and strike at the source.<sup>174</sup>

A Dutch merchant engaged in legal trade near Whydah reported that on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1861 300 slaves had been shipped on board an American schooner at Whydah.<sup>175</sup> At Little Popo a Spaniard was resident who had already purchased 150 slaves and was waiting in expectation of a vessel when he would purchase more. Several other American vessels, laden with tobacco and rum were also in the area and were expected to trade for slaves. Most of these vessels were from Salem or Boston. The slave trade had not been in such a 'flourishing condition' for many years and was believed to have been carried on primarily by Americans from the Northern States

By the end of 1863 the shipments of slaves had very much declined. In his report to Walker, Commodore Wilmot detailed how each division had fared.<sup>176</sup> I have summarised them as follows:

#### **North division**

No shipments of slaves to Cuba or elsewhere had been made during the previous year. The inhabitants of the region found it more profitable to cultivate ground nuts than to sell slaves. Domestic slavery was still rife as the cultivation of ground nuts was very labour intensive. Some captures had been made of canoes filled with slaves destined for the local plantations. These slaves were sometimes hidden under sacks of ground nuts to avoid detection.

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<sup>174</sup> A mosquito fleet was a number of small vessels light in draught and sufficient in number to patrol the lagoon and apprehend the canoes and other small craft normally used to transport slaves there.

<sup>175</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A512, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1862.

<sup>176</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.5 S1127, Commodore Wilmot to Walker, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1863.

## Bights of Benin

The slave traffic was much reduced in this region although there were slave dealers present on the coast. Only two shipments were known to have left the region in the previous year both transported by steamers. One of these steamers, the *Hoe d'Aqui* was captured by the American Admiral Wilks while attempting to run the blockade. The second steamer escaped from Godomy with 960 slaves on board. Such was the haste in shipping these slaves that a great many more were drowned. These slaves were further believed to be infected with smallpox and information from Cuba reported that they had all been seized by the governor-general when landed there.

The King of Dahomey, it was believed, continued to sell the captives of his annual wars to the slave dealers who would ship them when the chance arose. Once in the slave dealers' possession, their captives would be marched up and down the coast in consequence of the cruisers movements. A great many of them died before being shipped.

It was believed that if the strength of the squadron could be maintained, the sea traffic could be halted all together. This was difficult though as the ships often needed repairs at Ascension and one ship was constantly sailing to St. Helena for the health of officers and men. The want of provisions and fuel occasioned, likewise, the temporary withdrawal of a cruiser from her duties on the station.

Slave dealers often arrived on the West African mail steamers sometimes with as much as \$300 000, 20 tons of powder and 80 puncheons of rum.<sup>177</sup> These steamers also greatly aided the slavers, although unwittingly, by conveying messages between them. It was recommended that the government issue instructions forbidding these practices.

Legal trade in the region was on the increase with merchants able to safely open factories along the coast providing beef, fowls, vegetables, eggs and oranges as well as palm oil.

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<sup>177</sup> These steamers carried cargo and passengers between the various settlements (such as Sierra Leone and the Gambia) in the area at the time.

## South division

The trade in this region was also on the decline. The last shipment made by the *Marequita* was captured by HMS *Zebra* with 471 slaves in March of 1863 near the Congo. Previous to that (February 1863) HMS *Brisk* captured the *Bella Augustina*, a schooner of 165 tons, with 368 slaves on board off Anna Bon where she had put in for water after shipping from the Congo.

There were a number of other captures which had begun to persuade the slave dealers to move from the Congo due to the watchfulness of the cruisers. Despite this some slavers managed to escape such as the *Ocilla* which shipped from Molongo on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1862 with 1400 slaves on board. This vessel had been watched for some time but managed to evade capture during a dark night.

American slavers were experiencing great difficulties during this period. Not only did they have to avoid the British cruisers, but once away from the African coast they had to contend with their own nation's privateers and naval blockade as they approached the American coast and Cuba. The signing of the treaty giving right of search of American ships had led to slavers altering their strategy. They would come out to the coast with legal papers and cargo and then await an opportunity to get off clear with a cargo of slaves. The American civil war had a greatly beneficial effect on the suppression of the trade as it greatly increased the chances of a slave speculation failing and this uncertainty made the traders most loathe to risk their capital.

The abolition of the French emigration system had a great effect on the trade.<sup>178</sup> The factories and buildings they had previously occupied were advertised for sale. The *engagé* traffic did continue to a lesser extent and lasted into the 1880s in some regions.

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<sup>178</sup> The French free emigration or *engagé à temps* system was meant to allow colonists to procure indentured labourers. This system caused much controversy as although the labourers were technically free on the Mascarenes they left Africa as slaves and hence inspired the slave traders. The British complained to the French about the system but the French refused to halt it until the British allowed them to recruit 'coolies' in India. Lovejoy, *Transformations*, 220-2.

The legal trade in this region consisted of palm oil, ground nuts, copper ore and ivory. It was said to be growing quite rapidly.

## The Eastern Division

When Walker assumed command at the Cape he received a report from the senior officer on the East Coast at the time, Commander Oldfield. It stated that during December, January and February 1860-1 over 100 dhows from the piratical tribes of the Persian Gulf had visited Zanzibar.<sup>179</sup> By the end of March they had procured by purchase and theft some 4 000 slaves. Once the wind began to blow from the south between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March 15 to 20 dhows began their journey northwards carrying 1 000 to 1 500 slaves with them. Between the 20<sup>th</sup> March and the 20<sup>th</sup> April during which time HMS *Lyra* was in the vicinity of Zanzibar some 1 500 to 1 800 slaves were shipped in most part to the Persian Gulf. Oldfield stated that were it not for the exertions of Colonel Rigby together with the presence of the *Lyra* 1 500 more would probably have been shipped. By the 20<sup>th</sup> of April only five or six dhows from the Persian Gulf remained in Zanzibar harbour. Of those dhows which departed approximately 40 or 50 were empty. The *Lyra* seized four full dhows and fourteen empty.

The Northern Arabs inspired such fear in the Sultan that he annually paid them an amount \$15-20 000. Oldfield confirmed the American Consulate incident mentioned in the chapter on ships cruises. The blockade of the Consulate was only withdrawn after the payment of \$500 to the Sheikh of the besieging Arabs.

By about the middle of April dhows belonging mostly to the Zanzibar Arabs returned from the ports of Kilwa and Lamu, filled with slaves. They bypassed the custom house and were thus liable to capture under the treaty of 1847.

European brigs visited the coast in February and March of 1861. One Spanish brig cruised along the coast between Mozambique and Mombasa and when searched had no slaving equipment on board as she was believed to be acting as a tender and spy to

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<sup>179</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE146, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1861.

two other slaving vessels, one which intended to ship from Madagascar and the other from Ibo.

Oldfield asked what the fate of Zanzibar would be if Rigby was removed as without his tact, judgement and firmness the French would surely have a firm footing there if not possession of it. Oldfield clearly liked Rigby and evidently disagreed with Crawford's allegations against him.<sup>180</sup>

Commander Oldfield and Consul Pelly recommended the establishment of a slave depot to lessen the inconvenience caused to her majesty's ships by the need to transport captured slaves long distances.<sup>181</sup> There were insufficient boats to despatch one every time a dhow was captured (which as they were mostly unseaworthy were incapable of shipping the slaves to a suitable location themselves) and carrying them aboard the cruisers caused a "general harm to be done to their [the crews] discipline and efficiency". Consul Pelly further noted that there were at that time 400 to 600 slaves at Zanzibar under his supervision awaiting shipment to a suitable colony. He reasoned that while it might be possible to organise transport to the Seychelles if their labour was required there it was out of the question to ship them the much longer distance to Mauritius or Natal. He suggested a depot be formed at the Copal diggings where labour was much needed. He further noted that the missionary station under "that energetic and much to be commended minister and traveller Dr. Kraft" could assist in this matter. This would take the form of a free colony populated by emancipated slaves no doubt under European tutelage and control.

In response to a request from the Consul at Zanzibar, Colonel Pelly, the British government replied that they were not inclined to ask the Sultan of Zanzibar to dismiss the governor of Lamu, Sayyid Saood.<sup>182</sup> The Sultan was taking steps to put a stop to the export of slaves from his dominions. The Sultan had refused to allow British ships to search and seize any shipping flying the Zanzibari flag and involved in the slave trade. The reason given for this was that the steps taken by the British

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<sup>180</sup> Crawford and Rigby had engaged in a most unusual and possibly slanderous exchange over Crawford's visit to Zanzibar and his conduct whilst there. I deal with this more fully in section 3 which follows.

<sup>181</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S470, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

<sup>182</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A742, Admiralty to Walker, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1862.

Consul in preventing HM Indian subjects from owning slaves had already done serious damage to the economy and he was loathe to risk any more as it would be the ruin of his country. The British for their part felt that halting the traffic in slaves would in the long run be good for the Zanzibar people. This was due to the fact that the slaves procured were taken from peaceful and unoffending villages which were devastated by the slave raids. The fact that the Sultan permitted and raised revenue from this trade meant that he was enriching himself at the cost of great misery to his people.

HMS *Ariel*, under the command of Captain Chapman, went to Nosy Be and found the *America* lying offshore there.<sup>183</sup> The *America* appeared to be waiting for the *Ariel* to leave and would then to proceed to her rendezvous, near Cape St Andrews, where she would receive slaves said to be 750 in number. When the *Ariel* approached the *America* sailed off. "As I could not search her in Nosy Be I thought my best plan was to set sail and to try and intercept her outside," Chapman remarked. He therefore sailed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March and after anchoring one night in Mareenda Bay, examined some dhows and purchased firewood. He sailed back on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and anchored a long way out. He intended to lay off the coast at night and send boats in to see if *America* was still there, but at daylight on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April she was sighted on the port quarter. The *Ariel* immediately tacked and gave chase. Chapman sent Mr. Buckle to board her. After receiving his report Captain Chapman's first idea was to see her safely out of the Mozambique Channel but as she was much faster than the *Ariel* and the *Ariel* only had 10 tons of coal left he decided to board her himself accompanied by the two lieutenants. This he did and finding her papers so incorrect and such a large quantity of water on board and as the Captain (of the *America*) stated that he was bound direct for Cadiz he decided to send her to Sierra Leone. He felt by so doing that even if she were not condemned everything about her and her cargo were of such a suspicious nature as to warrant the steps he had taken. Chapman felt he had achieved a major blow to the slave trade by preventing her from shipping with slaves on board. He was fairly sure Walker would approve of his actions. Chapman hoped to sail on the 18<sup>th</sup> and to cruise for dhows. "I hear it is the intention of the northern Arabs to stand out a long way off the land and to proceed direct to Socotra. I hope to intercept

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<sup>183</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVII, Captain Chapman to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1864.

them” he remarked. “In a conversation I had with the French Consul he told me that owing to the very suspicious reports and behaviour of the Spanish ship *America* he had refused to act as Consul although ordered to act for Spain, and that he had written to his own government explaining his reasons.”

The slave trade was carrying on in larger numbers than ever before with little hinderance. Walker was ordered to negotiate with Consul Pelly about how best to compel the Sultan of Zanzibar to enforce the treaties signed with his father if he refused to do so on his own.<sup>184</sup>

A dhow was discovered off Pemba Island loading slaves on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1862 by Lieutenant Clark.<sup>185</sup> The dhow already had 6 slaves on board. James Blackmore who was left in charge of the captured dhow while Lieutenant Clark proceeded up the river in search of more dhows was attacked by Arabs from the shore and severely wounded with several sword cuts to the body and head. The attacking Arabs then fled taking the captured slaves with them. The dhow was destroyed as she was stranded, had no papers or colour and in order that the party could proceed with all haste to Zanzibar to procure medical aid.

By the end of Walker’s period of command in 1864 the Eastern Division had made great progress against the slavers.<sup>186</sup> Two Spanish vessels had been under suspicion in the previous year. One of them left with a legal cargo while the other the *America* was detained by HMS *Ariel* and sent to Sierra Leone for adjudication (as that was the closest vice Admiralty court with Spanish representation) The mate of the *America* was left on shore in Mozambique before her capture, supposedly to take charge of a quantity of wine in the customs house there but more probably to act as an agent for other slavers that were rumoured to be arriving shortly afterwards.

A dhow taken by HMS *Rapid* at the end of the previous year was no larger than 30 tons but carried 200 slaves as well as passengers and cargo. This Captain Gardner of HMS *Orestes* believed showed how cheaply the value of lives were held in

<sup>184</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A875, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1862.

<sup>185</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S433, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

<sup>186</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.5 S1123, Captain Alan Gardner to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1864.

comparison with the value of the vessel. The dhow traffic from the Sultan's territory appeared to have been lessened to a great extent with few or no dhows attempting to transport slaves due to the presence of two active cruisers there.

The Consul in Zanzibar at this time, Colonel Playfair reported that since the Sultan's orders that no slaves were to be transported during the monsoon, the aspect of the trade in Zanzibar had changed. The cruisers were given permission to capture any of his subjects' vessels which transported slaves during this period provided they were brought to Zanzibar for adjudication. Slave vessels that had previously passed daily under the windows of his house were no longer seen and the slave market was virtually empty. The northern Arabs who had previously terrorised the town were few in number (half the number of previous years) and quiet in demeanour.

The scale of importation of slaves into the Zanzibar market (which reflected the demand of the Northern markets) was falling steeply. For the year ending:

August 1861	-	19 000
August 1862	-	14 000
August 1863	-	12 000

Playfair believed the number would be considerably lower in 1864. The price of slaves in Arabia had risen dramatically, exceeding \$300 in the North while the price in Zanzibar was from \$6-20. Gardner believed that these successes would quickly be reversed if the British cruisers were withdrawn.

Unfortunately Playfair's hopes proved over optimistic as the following figures show. In the year ending August 1869, 81 cargoes of slaves were landed at Zanzibar mostly from Kilwa.<sup>187</sup> The total number of slaves imported was 11 944. A further 3 000 were exported directly to Lamu and Pemba in the same year (from Kilwa). In 1869, 400 vessels, mostly involved in the trade to the north were boarded and searched. Eleven slavers were detected and 1 000 slaves freed. It is difficult to estimate the true number of dhows involved in the slave trade from these figures as some of the dhows may

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<sup>187</sup> Colomb, *Slave Catching*, 31-47.



have been searched twice by successive men of war. The more complacent attitudes of Consuls Playfair and Pelly towards the Arabs in Zanzibar (after Rigby's hard line) may have encouraged the slave trade somewhat. The Northern trade does seem to have been greatly curtailed however and the slaves could have been destined for local plantations.

## **Relations with other Powers**

### **France**

Walker was ordered to maintain good relations with the French as per the orders issued on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1854 (issued during the Crimean War for the protection of French interests).<sup>188</sup> He was further instructed to inform the chief officers of French ships he met of his orders and intentions and to meet with the Commander of the French Naval Squadron as soon as possible. The French had issued similar orders to their navy.

This is interesting as it shows the scope of international relations. Affairs in Turkey affected how the Cape was run. It was felt necessary to show the strength of the Franco-Anglo alliance to Russia in all parts of the world. Therefore British and French military and civil interests were meant to work jointly to protect both their interests in all parts of the world. In this spirit French ships returning home from China were permitted to fill up with coal at Simonstown, provided it didn't inconvenience the Royal Navy.<sup>189</sup>

Walker attempted to carry out these orders. In correspondence with Commandant Dupré, the Commander in Chief of the French Naval forces on the East Coast of Africa, the tone was friendly and Dupré asked after Lady Walker.<sup>190</sup> They promised to try to meet at Sea as soon as possible. This was not to be the case however and when

<sup>188</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A30, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1861.

<sup>189</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A165, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1861.

<sup>190</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder VIII, Commandant Dupre to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

Dupré bid Walker farewell in March 1864 he expressed his regret that they had not managed to meet.<sup>191</sup> He asked Walker to call on his wife if he was ever in Paris.

Although the French had officially banned the slave trade they still needed labourers for their colonies in the Indian Ocean. In order to recruit these they set up the *engagé* system. This system was supposed to recruit free labourers for work on French plantations but was normally perverted into the recruitment (purchase) of slaves who were then declared to be free men usually by a corrupt chief in places like the Comoros. I give three examples of this practice to describe how it worked.

After the British Consul was informed of the arrival of the French Schooner *Autoucar* at Johanna with 40 Negroes on board he questioned the captain.<sup>192</sup> He was told that the men were labourers for a sugar estate on Nosy Be and had been engaged on the Island of Comoro. When questioned, the ship's interpreter said they had been bought at Kilwa for \$25 each and that the vessel had only called at Comoro for the purpose of procuring a certificate of origin there and that this was obtained from one of the chiefs there for \$250.

The French authorities denied all knowledge of the incident.<sup>193</sup> The French claimed that such a trade was impossible due to the precautions taken by them against it. In return the French accused the British cruisers of frequently hoisting French colours in an attempt to more closely watch the Arab slavers.

HMS *Brisk* gave chase to a dhow on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1861 which upon approach hoisted French colours. Permission was obtained to board to make enquiries about a French dhow which had been wrecked nearby (on the coast of Mohilla).<sup>194</sup> Upon boarding Lieutenant Adeane discovered that the cargo of this dhow was 93 Africans (not Comoro Islanders) and that one of the three white men on board was the chief of police of Mayotte, M. Colon. Captain de Horsey's initial intention was to accompany the dhow to Mayotte but upon reflection decided not to as his purpose could be construed as interfering with a vessel sailing under the French Flag. de Horsey believed that the government of France would not permit this 'unnatural traffic' once

<sup>191</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder VIII, Commandant Dupre to Walker, 8th March 1864.

<sup>192</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A232, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1861.

<sup>193</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A409, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1861.

<sup>194</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE98, Captain de Horsey to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1861.

informed that it was carried out not only with the knowledge of but under the direct authority of the governor of Mayotte. Furthermore he noted that although it was common knowledge that the Africans imported into Mayotte were not nominally slaves but *engagés*, the slave trade in dhows was one of the worst causing great suffering for the captives through lack of provisions. As this vessel started its voyage in the Comoros de Horsey believed that there was no doubt that French agents there were inducing Arabs to bring slaves to the Comoros at their own risk and from there to ship them in dhows under French colours to Mayotte and further afield.

HMS *Wasp* while anchored at Johanna on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1861 was approached by a boat from a French Brigantine which was in distress.<sup>195</sup> This vessel had been adrift for ten days after her mooring cables had parted (due to a French brig running across her bows) and had been carried out to sea where she drifted in contrary currents and light winds. Her provisions were nearly exhausted and after learning that she had 50 African labourers aboard Commander Stirling consented to sell her water, rum and bread. Three days later when the brigantine herself arrived the pilot declared that the labourers were in fact slaves and had been purchased on the mainland at Kilwa for 25 dollars a head. The vessel had then sailed to the Comoros where a bribe of 200 or 300 dollars had been paid to a headman to give a passport stating that the labourers had originated from his island. Whilst at Johanna several of the Africans attempted to escape with one or two succeeding which confirmed the involuntary nature of their service. The brigantine's name was *Entincore* and her owner M. Daton, a sugar estate owner from Nosy Be, was on board. So too was the requisite government officer whose job it was to ensure that the recruitment of labour was voluntary. After receiving supplies the vessel sailed for Nosy Be.

Although the French denied any such illicit trade there are sufficient examples where Royal Navy ships intercepted these cargoes (and of observers in the French Colonies) to make its existence beyond a doubt. What is more questionable is the French involvement in the actual slave trade. There is little evidence of French involvement in this trade but due to the fact that Royal Navy ships weren't able to inspect French

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<sup>195</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE99, Commander Stirling to Walker, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1861.

ships there wouldn't be. The following is the one example in the Admiralty records for the period.

Stanhope Freeman, the Consul for the Bight of Benin, reported that on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1862 a French steamer shipped 1007 slaves from Aghwey.<sup>196</sup> This was felt by the Consul to be evidence that the trade could not be suppressed by cruisers alone as the slave dealers were capable of obtaining precise information as to the position of the cruisers and thus easily avoid them. On this occasion the cruisers were engaged watching Whydah where the slaves were expected to be shipped. As Whydah was so closely monitored, the slaves were transported by Lagoon to Aghwey from whence they were shipped. HMS *Griffon* seeing a French steamer appear gave chase but she turned out to be a French Man of War. In doing so the *Griffon* burned all her coal and was forced to proceed to Fernando Po to refuel. In the meantime the slaver ran in and carried away her cargo without hindrance. For this reason Freeman suggested that a coal depot be established at Lagos to minimise the time spent travelling to refuel and maximise the cruising time.

The French took great offence when one of their vessels was searched or even had her papers inspected by a British man of war. They felt the British had no right to do so. Hence when a boat from HMS *Philomel* boarded the French ship *La Nouvelle Esperance* a full report explaining the circumstances was sought by the Admiralty.<sup>197</sup> Another incident was caused when Captain Crawford of HMS *Sidon* inspected *L'Hermione's* papers.<sup>198</sup>

Yet another incident took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1862 when the French brig *Pierre Frederic* was sailing from Gabon to the Kru coast.<sup>199</sup> She was sighted by HMS *Dart*, a steam corvette, which gave chase. The *Dart* approaching the *Pierre Frederic* fired a blank cartridge in an attempt to make her heave to. After a second shot was fired the *Pierre Frederic* allowed a party to board under protestation. The *Dart's* men examined the ships papers and then proceeded to question the black passengers as to their status and to ascertain whether there were other Negroes under confinement

<sup>196</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A1014, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 9<sup>th</sup> January 1863.

<sup>197</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A283, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>198</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A426, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1861.

<sup>199</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S543, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1862.

(through sound and smell). The French complained that although the *Pierre Frederic* had been tardy in showing her colours at first once they were shown the English had no right to board her and examine her cargo other than to inspect the papers to ascertain the legitimacy of her claim to French nationality. The British replied that the *Pierre Frederic*'s suspicious behaviour in not heaving to led to suspicions as to her legitimate use of the French flag. The boarding according to the British took place in a most courteous manner. They denied searching the cargo.

A more serious confrontation occurred when the *Leopard*, which had been captured by HMS *Zebra* and taken to Sierra Leone for adjudication, was proven to be a French vessel.<sup>200</sup> Lord Russel wished that the French be informed that when a Captain refused to show his papers proving legitimate use of a flag it could only be assumed that he had no right to fly it. (This was the case with the *Leopard*.) A French naval officer Poisson (of the *Africain*) who had stated that his orders required him to use force for the purpose of releasing any French vessel which he felt was improperly detained (rather than await the decision of the Vice-Admiralty Court etc.) was warned of the potentially serious consequences of such an action. The British Consul at Sierra Leone upon hearing Poisson's threats had advised him 'as a friend' to hold off until the court came to a decision. Poisson gave him an ultimatum and Consul Blackall took steps to ensure military intervention would be ineffective in the event of a decision against the French.

The Royal Navy Squadron was at various times accused of actively (or through the disruption they caused to Arab shipping) obstructing French commerce. In March 1861, five French merchant vessels were awaiting the arrival of their merchandise from the mainland of Africa in Zanzibar harbour. Two boats of HMS *Lyra* were sufficiently visible as to prevent the shipment of the cargo as the Arab merchants feared molestation by the British. These cargoes had been paid for in advance as was the custom in Zanzibar and had hence caused large losses for the merchants concerned. The French Consul protested to the Sultan of Zanzibar who in turn complained to Colonel Rigby.

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<sup>200</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1251, Admiralty to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

In August and September of the same year, once the *Lyra* had left Zanzibar and been replaced by HMS *Gorgon*, two French agents presented themselves to the British Consulate to collect 3480 French Francs (in gold) and 2 200 piastres respectively which had been delivered to the master of the dhow *Fatalher* and which the French claimed had been confiscated by men on board the boats of the *Gorgon*.<sup>201</sup> Colonel Rigby denied that this had occurred although all passengers and crew of the dhow swore it had. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September the same two boats were accused of destroying two dhows on the Zanga Coast of Africa which were carrying 264 bales of white linen and 2000 cocoa nuts respectively. The French contended that through these actions the British were ruining all commerce at Zanzibar.

## Portugal

Portugal gradually started to help in suppressing the slave trade.<sup>202</sup> In 1865 she brought two captured vessels before the mixed commission court at the Cape. In 1860-3 the number of slaves shipped around the Cape dropped from 15-20 000 to 12-1500 annually. Royal Navy vessels started to focus on the Northern section of the coast with only one ship visiting Mozambique in 1866. Royal Navy patrols were thereafter concentrated between Muscat and Aden on the East Coast

Britain repeatedly accused officials in Mozambique of connivance in the slave trade. Portugal had officially abolished the trade but there was good evidence (much of it from the Royal Navy) that the trade still flourished, particularly in the outlying provinces. The Portuguese government for its part expressed its faith in the Governor-General at Mozambique but requested specific information about the connivance of its officials in the East African Territories, particularly the governors of Ibo and Quelimane.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE172, Captain Dupre to Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1861.

<sup>202</sup> Beachey. *Slave Trade of East Africa*, 24.

<sup>203</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A114, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1861.

To this end the commissioners at Cape Town compiled a report on the slave trade.<sup>204</sup> Their report concluded that the numbers of slaves exported to the north from the Portuguese territories was about 5 – 6 000 per year at a cost of about \$20 a head at Ibo. From Pemba Bay they believed there was no trade carried on except for that in slaves. In addition a large number were exported to the French colonies as *engagés*. Slaves were purchased on the mainland and transported to Comoro where papers were procured for them as contract labourers (from corrupt chiefs).

Vessels which had recently been condemned:

- 1) The *Nightingale* captured by US ship *Saratoga* off the Congo with 961 slaves on board
- 2) The *Esperance* from Barcelona captured by HMS *Lyra* and condemned at Cape Town in October 1860
- 3) The *Sunny South* from Havana, condemned at Mauritius as a prize to HMS *Brisk* in October 1860
- 4) The *Formosa Estrella* from Havana, condemned at the Cape as a prize to HMS *Persian* in March 1861.

The *Esperance* and *Formosa Estrella* were the only ships brought before the Vice-Admiralty Court in Cape Town that year. In addition no less than 18 dhows had been taken that year and additional captures had been taken to Mauritius of which they had no knowledge. They expressed their regret that only three vessels were available for the suppression of the trade.

When Commander Stirling of HMS *Wasp* visited Mozambique in 1861 he commented that the main traffic in this area was in slaves which were sold for \$25-35 a head.<sup>205</sup> The capital of the province of the Isles of Cape Delgado was Ibo. At Ibo every house appeared to have a slave barracoon. The governor Major Jito was said to have been formerly friendly towards the British and against the slave trade but appeared to at least have countenanced if not been actively involved in it at this point.

<sup>204</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A401, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1861.

<sup>205</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE147, Commander Stirling to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1861. HMS *Wasp*'s visit to the coast in 1861 was limited to the area between the point of Mazimba (Lat 11° 30S) and Maunhane Point (lat 13° S) both in Mozambique.

At the time of the Wasp's visit there were 5-6 000 slaves awaiting embarkation at Ibo. The French were carrying on a considerable slave (*engagé*) traffic from this region to supply Nosy Be and their other possessions. At Johanna there was extensive domestic slavery with even the British Consul employing slave labour as none other than slaves would work (the Consul hired 'labourers' from a local Arab).

Baldwin Walker was requested to confirm the complicity of the Portuguese governors of Ibo, Quelimane etc. in the trade before the British Foreign Secretary would make a formal representation to the Portuguese government in Lisbon.

The Portuguese government sent orders to the Mozambican government to investigate thoroughly the allegations against the governors of Ibo and Quelimane of complicity in the trade and if they were found guilty to dismiss them.<sup>206</sup> The Portuguese government after investigating the matter emphatically denied that the slave trade was carried on from their East African Territories with the complicity of the officials there.<sup>207</sup> From the numerous reports submitted by Royal Navy men and other visitors to Mozambique it would appear that the Portuguese Government deliberately misled or overlooked the glaring proof that the large traffic was being carried on. The fact that the French obtained so many *engagés* from the region also suggests the colonial officials had to have known of and chosen to ignore the existence of the external slave trade (the internal slave trade in Mozambique was still legal at this time).

Although the Foreign Office may have been convinced by these pleas of innocence the Royal Navy men on the spot were not and continued to regard Portuguese shipping with suspicion. Such was the harassment to Portuguese shipping by the Royal Navy that the Portuguese felt it necessary to apply for a permit for their convict ships to travel unmolested. A permit of safe passage was issued for the *Viagante* which had been chartered to carry convicts and their families to Mozambique and Goa.<sup>208</sup> For this purpose she carried large boilers and other cooking apparatus as well as a large quantity of water. These items could have been considered proof of slave trading under the treaty of 9<sup>th</sup> July 1842.

<sup>206</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A621, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1861.

<sup>207</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A878, Admiralty to Walker, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1862.

<sup>208</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A172, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1861.



The Portuguese possessions on the West Coast of Africa had for years been a major supplier of slaves to the new world. The presence of the naval squadrons along the coast had lessened the number of slaves that were shipped but there was great fear that the shipments would resume. The Portuguese claimed huge areas of land but did not have the men or resources to control them and were hence prime areas for slaving. Grants of land supposedly for plantations or mining were viewed with suspicion by those who thought the Portuguese had no industry but slaving. An example of a suspicious grant follows.

Sir Henry Huntley, HM Consul at the mixed commission court at Luanda reported that the Portuguese government had recently granted one Signor Francisco Antonio Flores a large tract of land in the province of Angola ostensibly for the purpose of establishing copper mines there.<sup>209</sup> The territory granted to him commenced 35 miles south of Benguela and continued south for 9 miles. Flores was for many years one of the most prolific slave dealers and it was felt probable that the real purpose of this grant was for him to resume the slave trade. Flores had been strongly implicated in several shipments of slaves from the Congo and southern Angola in the previous year. The Foreign Office requested the naval officers to ascertain whether there was truth in the copper mine story and to see whether the slave trade was taking place.

The British accusations against the Portuguese were in many cases based on flimsy and often contradictory evidence. For example in February 1863 Commodore Wilmot, after visiting Whydah, Lagos and other parts of West Africa stated that there was no doubt that the slave trade still continued to Brazil.<sup>210</sup> He was ordered to make particular and stringent inquiries into the trade and to transmit the information to the Admiralty.

In June of the same year the Admiralty sent the following order.<sup>211</sup> Due to the fact that for some years no vessel under the Brazilian flag had been found to be involved in the slave trade it was felt that Brazilian shipping should be regarded in a better light

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<sup>209</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A448, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1861.

<sup>210</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A1041, Admiralty to Walker, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1863.

<sup>211</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1259, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1863.

generally. This was in response to Brazilian merchants complaints (many of whom were British or British funded) that their lawful trade would be molested by British Cruisers if carried on under the Brazilian flag. The Portuguese did make an attempt to control the slave trade in their territories. Their authorities captured a launch with 79 slaves on board south of Luanda. It was feared that more slaving had been engaged in this area than previously thought. It was recommended that Royal Navy Cruisers visited the area more often.

While there is no doubt that many of the officials in the Portuguese territories in Africa were involved in the trade their government was powerless to stop them. They did not have the resources, military or financial, to control the traffic and relied heavily on Britain for this. The influence of France on the East Coast and her desire for the nominally free *engagé* labourers greatly stimulated the trade there. The Portuguese gave birth to their own 'free labour system', that of the *emancipados*. Under this system all Africans had to work for the government for a certain period of time.

Numerous smaller nations were rumoured to be involved in the slave trade. Most of the time these allegations proved to be false.

## Spain

Spain was the first country to develop the transatlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century. By the nineteenth century her once mighty power had waned considerably and in 1815, 1818 and 1835 Spain signed treaties with Britain limiting her subjects' involvement in slave trading and granting the reciprocal right of search of shipping. These treaties effectively curtailed Spanish flagged vessels' participation in the slave trade. Her colony, Cuba, continued to be a major market for slaves in the latter half of the nineteenth century however and to supply this demand the trade continued in mostly American flagged vessels. The US Consul in Havana, Nicholas Trist, helped Cuban slavers by making US registration and flags easily available to ships. Many

slaves were transported from Cuba to Texas which was newly independent after Mexico banned the slave trade in 1829.<sup>212</sup>

Cuba imported some 200 000 slaves from 1840-60. Slaves were procured on both the East and West Coasts of Africa. Prices of slaves were low after the Brazilian abolition of the slave trade and the profits were too large to resist. In 1858-62 about 100 000 slaves were imported into Cuba, many from the East Coast of Africa. British merchants supplied the trade goods and finance. During 1858-61 the British did not patrol much off the coast of Cuba as there was too high a risk of conflict with Spain. By 1863 however there were 6 British ships patrolling off Cuba due to the new British treaty with America which allowed for effective action against the slavers. A new Captain-General in Cuba, Domingo Dulce, expelled some slave traders and suspended some governors for complicity in the trade. He also freed the press somewhat, allowing newspapers to publish abolitionist arguments for the first time. The change of public mood in Cuba can be attributed to four main reasons:

1. The high cost of slaves (\$1250-1500 in 1864)
2. Manumission had depleted the slave labour available
3. An increasing sense of national identity and destiny was developing
4. The American civil war had stimulated abolitionist sentiment.

Despite these advances there were still 25 000 slaves imported into Cuba in 1863. The last known landing took place in January 1870 when 900 slaves were landed in the province of Havana. Slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico in 1873 and in Cuba in 1886.

Due to the scarcity of Spanish vessels involved in the slave trade, Spain does not feature prominently in this study. While Cuba provided much of the demand for the transatlantic slave trade during this period it was carried out almost exclusively under other nations' flags and in vessels without flags or papers.

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<sup>212</sup> Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 635-780.

## The Netherlands

Commodore Wilmot reported that the Dutch officials at Elmina were in the practice of buying slaves from the King of Ashanti and exporting them to the East and West Indies. He was asked to justify so serious a statement by the Admiralty.<sup>213</sup> Wilmot's complaint that some of his cruisers were not issued with the warrants required under the right of search treaty with the Netherlands was regarded as unavoidable as under the treaty only 12 such warrants were to be issued and the Admiralty had decided to allocate only six of these to the West Coast division of the Cape Squadron. It was therefore impossible for every cruiser to be issued with one.<sup>214</sup>

## Ireland

Ireland had been united with Britain since 1800 and the slave trade was therefore banned there. Hence when claims arose that an Irish vessel was slaving it caused great consternation amongst the Foreign Office and Royal Navy personnel. It was alleged that the Irish schooner *Lady Abercromby* was sailing along the West Coast of Africa on a legitimate trading voyage when her captain died. Thereafter the mate landed four of the crew near Cabinda and took on fresh hands and a cargo of slaves. The men managed to communicate these happenings with Captain Douglas of HMS *Espoir*, who confirmed their story with a Dutch merchant on the coast. The *Lady Abercromby* left the coast on the last day of July with two hundred slaves on board. The vessel matched the description of that destroyed by HMS *Antelope* on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August. This information was sent with all haste to England so that those responsible could be punished accordingly.<sup>215</sup>

After the schooner, *Lady Abercromby*, arrived in England with a legal cargo from the African Coast, further investigations of the allegation that she was involved in the

<sup>213</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1464, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1863.

<sup>214</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A1107, Admiralty to Walker, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1863.

<sup>215</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S591, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1862.

slave trade (made by two British seamen) showed that there was absolutely no truth in them whatsoever.<sup>216</sup>

This is a strange case indeed. I believe that it can only be explained by the fact that the men making the accusations had deserted and spun a yarn in order to be carried back to the nearest town. Involvement in the slave trade was tantamount to suicide for British people as if they were caught they were sure to be executed.

## Haiti

A warrant was sent for Captain Forsyth of the *Valorous* to enable him to act in the suppression of the slave trade with Haiti. Despite its small size Haiti was a very keen supporter of the abolition of slavery. She even captured a Cuban slaver in the Caribbean!!

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<sup>216</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A937, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1862.

## **Other duties performed by the Cape Squadron**

Although much of the Cape Squadron's time and energy was spent on the suppression of the slave trade it must be remembered that they also had other duties. The Cape of Good Hope was of crucial strategic importance in keeping the shipping lanes open to India and beyond. The American Civil War was a worldwide conflict and the Cape Squadron bore the responsibility for protecting British shipping and trade from infringements by either side on the African coast.

David Livingstone was undertaking his great expeditions during this period and the Cape Squadron was tasked with supplying him with provisions, arms, transport and in some cases men. The Cape Colony and Natal were also almost constantly in a state of conflict with the surrounding black tribes and responsibility fell to the squadron to provide emergency relief as we shall see.

## **Protection of West African Commerce in the Event of War with the US**

In late 1861 there was great fear in Britain that she might become involved in the American Civil War. Relations between Britain and America had been strained numerous times since their declaration of independence. It was feared that if war broke out with the Federal government of America punitive expeditions would be sent to damage British trade interests around the world and in West Africa (which was of course of particular relevance to the Cape). The Cape Station was thus ordered to make every effort to protect British commercial interests on the West Coast as well as the Consul at Fernando Po.<sup>217</sup> For this purpose reinforcements would be sent.

There were six major places of trade in the bights of Biafra and Benin. These were the river Benue, Niger or Brass, New Calabar, Old Calabar, Bonny and the Cameroons. The annual value of trade to these places was estimated at £1 500 000. It was feared that in the event of war the slavers would also become privateers and attack the

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<sup>217</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.2 A472, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1861.

merchant shipping along the coast. For the protection of these areas it was recommended that two fast steamers be permanently stationed at Fernando Po.

In reality Britain barely managed to stay neutral throughout the conflict, a relationship which she was at great pains to maintain. This involved protecting the neutrality of her ports a famous example of which follows.

## The CSS Alabama

At the outbreak of the American civil war the Union States controlled most of the American mercantile shipping (which was close to being on par with Britain's merchant fleet). The Confederates therefore set about constructing raiders whose aim it was to capture Union shipping as prizes. All around the world American warships (Union and Confederate) and privateers hunted each other. The Cape was no exception.

The most famous of these raiders (or Confederate Cruisers as they were sometimes known) was the CSS *Alabama*. She was built in Liverpool in 1861-2. The fact that Britain was constructing these vessels was another point which raised tensions between her and the Union. The *Alabama* was commanded by Raphael Semmes and captured 66 prizes with a total value of over \$6 million dollars (at the time) before being sunk by the USS *Kearsarge* off Cherbourg in France on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1864. After the war the United States claimed damages caused to shipping from Britain because she had manufactured the *Alabama* and her sister ships. The US was awarded \$15.5 million. This became known as the '*Alabama* Claims'.

After a successful cruise along the coastline of the Americas, Captain Semmes sailed for the Southern Coast of Africa where he hoped his newly 'liberated' prize the CSS *Tuscaloosa* (previously the *Conrad*) would be able to capture a prize of her own in the South Atlantic.<sup>218</sup> A rendezvous was arranged at Saldanha Bay, on the West Coast of Africa slightly north of Cape Town. After a difficult voyage across the Atlantic the

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<sup>218</sup> E. Bradlow & F. Bradlow, *Here Comes the Alabama*, (Cape Town, 1958), 54.

CSS *Alabama* was spotted a few miles off Table Bay on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1863. The *Alabama* proceeded northwards to Saldanha Bay where she arrived on the 29<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>219</sup>

Some of the *Alabama*'s crew went ashore where they hunted and were entertained by the local farmers or Boers. Captain Semmes and the crew experienced a warm welcome from the Boers who relished the excitement and sympathised with the Confederate cause. Three of the crew deserted to Cape Town and after a brawl between two of the men shore leave was cancelled for all but the officers. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August while a party of officers who had been hunting were returning to the ship a young engineer, Simeon Cummings, dropped his rifle which went off shooting him through the lungs and killing him. He was buried the following day in the graveyard of a local farmer.<sup>220</sup>

Captain Semmes perhaps fearing more bad luck ordered the *Alabama* to leave Saldanha at dawn the following day.<sup>221</sup> A few miles out to sea a sail was spotted off the starboard bow. It turned out to be the CSS *Tuscaloosa*. She had managed to capture one American ship and Captain Semmes ordered her to proceed to Simon's Bay while the *Alabama* set sail for Table Bay and Cape Town itself.

Meanwhile the Governor at the Cape, Sir Philip Wodehouse had written to Admiral Walker warning him to expect a visit from the *Alabama*.<sup>222</sup> When Walker heard that the *Alabama* had been sighted some twenty miles off Table Bay he had at once ordered HMS *Valorous* to be ready to proceed around Cape Point to Table Bay and replied that if Wodehouse informed him when an American vessel of war arrived he would send HMS *Narcissus* or *Valorous* at once. He did not send the ships immediately as he feared they might arrive in Simon's Bay due to Table Bay being a poor anchorage.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>219</sup> W. Marvel, *The Alabama and the Kearsarge*, (Chapel Hill, 1996), 179.

<sup>220</sup> NLSA, MP1001, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

In May 1994 the remains of Lieutenant Simeon W Cummings were exhumed from his grave at Saldanha. He was reburied on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1994 in Columbia, Tennessee with over 5 000 people in attendance. Cummings had been the only Confederate sailor (or soldier) buried outside his homeland. From the Cape Odyssey via <http://www.sawestcoast.com/cummings.html>.

<sup>221</sup> Marvel, *Alabama*, 181.

<sup>222</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Sir P Wodehouse to Walker, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1863.

<sup>223</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Walker to Sir P Wodehouse, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1863.



There was no further news in Cape Town of the *Alabama* until the 5<sup>th</sup> of August when it was rumoured she would put into port soon as she had thirty prisoners to dispose of.<sup>224</sup> The American Consul wrote to the Governor that he “of course has orders to seize this ship and to send her to England” and if that were not the case he must immediately put a stop to the violation of British neutrality by allowing her to remain so long in port. The Governor replied that he had no orders to seize her and that he was acting in accordance with the instructions he had received i.e. that ships were allowed to put in for repairs. The Governor stated that Captain Semmes would abide by the rules and if he did not that he would enforce them.

The CSS *Alabama* arrived off Cape Town at noon on the 5<sup>th</sup> August.<sup>225</sup> A sail was sighted by her slightly outside British territorial waters. On closer inspection she was found to be a barque with American colours flying. The *Alabama* fired a blank round ordering the vessel to stop. The merchantman, then only six miles from Table Bay, attempted to flee to the safety of British waters. The *Alabama* pulled alongside and threatened to fire into the barque if she did not heave to. The merchantman continued to flee but clewed her sails only five miles out of the harbour. She was boarded and turned out to be the *Sea Bride* of Boston (and had completed all but five miles of her transatlantic voyage.) Captain Semmes, convinced the *Sea Bride* was a legitimate prize, transferred a prize crew to her but not daring to take a prize into a neutral port ordered her to meet him at Saldanha Bay on the 15<sup>th</sup> August should she be blown out to sea by a gale. A storm began that evening and blew for two days. During the storm the *Sea Bride* disappeared and was assumed to have sailed to Saldanha Bay.

Captain Forsyth of HMS *Valorous* reported boarding the *Alabama* the following day (6<sup>th</sup> August).<sup>226</sup> He remarked that she was a fine vessel of the despatch class. She required caulking, boiler attention and other repairs. She also intended to stay for a few days awaiting the CSS *Florida*. Forsyth was ordered to stay in Table Bay for the time being.

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<sup>224</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Sir P Wodehouse to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>225</sup> Marvel, *Alabama*, 181.

<sup>226</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

Governor Wodehouse was told by the paymaster of the *Alabama* that she could not have supplies loaded before noon the following day when she was expected to leave for Simon's Town for repairs.<sup>227</sup> After this she would be in Admiral Walker's hands. Captain Semmes was civil and anxious to cause as little trouble as possible. The US Consul asserted that the *Sea Bride* was taken in British waters (on the 5<sup>th</sup> August) and asked Wodehouse to take it up accordingly. The Governor promised a strict enquiry but believed it would be difficult to prove this assertion. Captain Semmes of the *Alabama* satisfied Captain Forsyth of the *Valorous* as to the exact position of the ships at the time of capture (outside the three mile limit). The CSS *Florida* was reported to be in the next harbour so Governor Wodehouse asked *Valorous* to remain for a few days until things were quiet again. The Governor understood that two fine US steamers were on their way to China and were to call at the Cape for coals. He thought the *Alabama* intended to take them and make them into privateers. Wodehouse was doing his best to put down any public demonstration of sympathy for the *Alabama* as he felt the Yankee Consul was behaving very well in trying circumstances.

Admiral Walker wrote to Governor Wodehouse that Captain Semmes of the *Alabama* was unlikely to give much trouble before the Federal ships appeared.<sup>228</sup> He ordered the *Valorous* to stay in Table Bay (as the Yankees were in a state of wrath and if the *Florida* arrived they might have caused trouble).

Captain Semmes offered the cargo of wool on board the *Tuscaloosa* for sale and it appeared that some parties made overtures to purchase the wool in question. The Captain replied that they might purchase it from the American Consul if he chose to ransom the vessel for £3000. But as this amount was not available in cash the sale was not affected. Captain Semmes therefore said he intended to burn both the *Sea Bride* and *Tuscaloosa* at sea. On 9<sup>th</sup> August the *Alabama* steamed round Cape Point to Simon's Bay.<sup>229</sup> En route Captain Semmes overhauled another American barque the *Martha Wenzell* also of Boston. The rice laden vessel was allowed to go after Semmes realised that on this occasion he had taken the barque inside British waters.

<sup>227</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Sir P Wodehouse to Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>228</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Walker to Wodehouse, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>229</sup> Marvel, *Alabama*, 182.

At Simon's Bay the *Alabama* received as warm a welcome as she had at Cape Town. Semmes visited Admiral Walker at his home the following morning (the 10<sup>th</sup> August) to explain his mistaken capture of the *Martha Wenzell* in British waters. Walker invited Semmes to spend half an hour in conversation with his family and they dined together the following night aboard the Admiral's flagship HMS *Narcissus*. The *Alabama* was caulked, scraped and painted while the inhabitants of the Cape continued to experience 'Alabama Fever'. Photographers and artists captured the ship in all her glory. One particular photographer, Green, carried his equipment aboard ship and immortalised Captain Semmes and Lieutenant Knell in the photograph which follows. Not all of the crew were happy though as they had not yet received their prize pay and feared for the future. News from the war in America was grave and six more of the crew attempted to desert (three successfully). To replace the six men who had deserted (three at Simon's Bay and three while at Saldanha), Semmes smuggled nine likely local recruits on board as stowaways as it was prohibited to recruit hands in a neutral port. Once safely in international waters Semmes officially recruited them and signed their articles. In reality a large proportion of Semmes's crew were recruited from the Royal Navy reserve and other foreign navies. Captain Semmes dined with Admiral Walker and Governor Wodehouse for lunch on the 13<sup>th</sup> August.

Once the *Florida* arrived, the *Alabama*, *Florida* and *Tuscaloosa* left Table Bay and sailed to Saldanha. The *Florida* boarded an outgoing barque on the way.<sup>230</sup> Two Cape merchants left for Saldanha with four sailors to take over the *Sea Bride*.<sup>231</sup> Governor Wodehouse sent the *Valorous* and a customs officer to investigate what was going on. Captain Forsyth reported that the *Sea Bride* had broken the Queen's proclamation by entering the port there.<sup>232</sup> On the 28<sup>th</sup> of August the *Sea Bride* departed for Mozambique or Batavia.<sup>233</sup> Returning to Simon's Bay, Captain Forsyth reported that the USS *Vanderbilt* had boarded the coaster, *Katie* off False Bay.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>230</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>231</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Sir P Wodehouse to Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>232</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder VII, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 24<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>233</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder VII, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>234</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder VII, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1863.

The next we hear of the *Alabama* was when Mr. Field, collector of customs, said that the *Tuscaloosa*, *Sea Bride* and *Alabama* had been seen at Ichaboe Island (off the West Coast of Southern Africa) loading and transferring cargoes. The *Alabama* was seen in a nearby lagoon and as a vessel had recently left Cape Town with coals it was believed she would probably remain there.<sup>235</sup>

Walker talked with Captain Semmes who said that none of his vessels had gone to Ichaboe and that the *Sea Bride* had been sold to a British subject resident in Cape Town for £3500.<sup>236</sup> Some of the wool from the *Tuscaloosa* had been sold, ballast put on and she had sailed for Brazil. He complained that the USS *Vanderbilt* had broken neutrality by being allowed to recoal at the Cape so soon after refuelling at St Helena (the instructions were that there were to be three months in between). The *Vanderbilt* had received 900 tons which was all the coal in Cape Town and had asked for an extra 200 tons to fill up from the Royal Navy stores. Walker refused. Semmes said that the *Alabama* would be ready to leave by Tuesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

A month later Walker received a dispatch stating that the *Tuscaloosa* should have been detained as a prize until her owners could retrieve her.<sup>237</sup> He was angered by this and believed that he had acted correctly as there was no law pertaining to this matter and the instructions were insufficient. After a great deal more debating over this issue<sup>238</sup> the final decision was that the *Tuscaloosa* should be put in charge of the Lieutenant who commanded her or someone nominated by Captain Semmes.<sup>239</sup> This kind of bureaucratic bungling and indecision was common when conversing with the Admiralty.

Captain Forsyth captured the *Sea Bride* in February 1864 in Madagascan waters.<sup>240</sup> The law officers said he had to release her unless King Radama II gave him permission to capture her. The last record there is of the whole affair comes from

<sup>235</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Sir P Wodehouse to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1863.

<sup>236</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Walker to Sir P Wodehouse, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1863.

<sup>237</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Walker to Sir P Wodehouse, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1863.

<sup>238</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVIII, Walker to Sir P Wodehouse, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1863, 26<sup>th</sup> December 1863, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1863, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1864.

<sup>239</sup> MSS, BC356, Box 3 Folder XVIII, Sir P Wodehouse to Walker, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1864.

<sup>240</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder VII, Captain Forsyth to Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1864.

Admiral Grey who stated that in future the *Alabama* was to be treated as a ship of war and that her prizes were not to be admitted and after a warning seized.<sup>241</sup>

University of Cape Town

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<sup>241</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Grey to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1864.



Captain Semmes (left) and Lieutenant Kell aboard the CSS *Alabama* in Cape Town.



The CSS *Alabama*

(Photos from US Navy collection top #NH57256. bottom #NH85593 KN)

## Livingstone

A responsibility which the squadron enjoyed from time to time was to assist David Livingstone in preparing for his travels and to carry news of him to the Cape. Mail was sometimes carried from Livingstone to the Bishop of Cape Town and his orders brought to him.<sup>242</sup>

The Portuguese were not overly friendly to Dr Livingstone as they feared that his influence would impact on their ability to procure slaves. They also feared British expansionism in East Africa. Thus while the Portuguese were publicly offering aid to Livingstone it was believed that secret orders had been issued to hinder his progress in all ways possible.<sup>243</sup> Portuguese expansionism was also feared by the British as the Portuguese intended to set up a customs house near Cape Delgado. A navigable path had not been found to the upper reaches of the Zambezi and it was believed that the Rovuma River might provide just such a route. Livingstone intended to explore this river and the British felt it essential that the Portuguese not be allowed to control the Rovuma's mouth as it was felt to be of key strategic value.<sup>244</sup> Today the northern border of Mozambique (formerly Portuguese) with Tanzania (previously German East Africa and later British Tanganyika) is the Rovuma River and this task was thus accomplished. HMS *Orestes* under Captain Alan Gardner towed the *Pioneer* from Johanna to Rovuma to achieve this purpose. They arrived at the Rovuma mouth on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1861 and Captain Gardner accompanied Livingstone upriver for two days.

In late 1861, Commander Wilson of HMS *Gorgon* was ordered to escort the *Hetty Ellen* to the mouth of the Zambezi and meet Livingstone there.<sup>245</sup> Aboard the *Hetty Ellen* were Livingstone's wife Mary and two other women, Miss Mackenzie and Mrs Burrup, as well as supplies and Livingstone's new vessel the *Lady Nyassa*. The rendezvous was set for the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1862 at the mouth of the Zambezi but due to delays Livingstone was unable to be there. When the *Gorgon* and *Hetty Ellen* returned

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<sup>242</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder III, Bishop of Cape Town to Walker, various dates.

<sup>243</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XII, George Frere to Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1861.

<sup>244</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XII, George Frere to Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1861.

<sup>245</sup> M. Buxton, *David Livingstone*, (New York, 2001), 128-9.

on the 31<sup>st</sup> January, Livingstone and his wife were reunited. Livingstone was overjoyed by the reunion and busied himself with assembling the *Lady Nyassa* while Commander Wilson ferried the other women to their rendezvous (with Mr Burrup and Bishop Mackenzie) at the confluence of the Shire and River Ruu. Upon reaching the meeting place the sad news was learnt that both men had died. Commander Wilson himself became gravely ill while visiting Magomero a short distance from the confluence. On the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1862 Mary Livingstone died. Livingstone was devastated but proceeded with his mission to explore the interior of the region. Livingstone's organisational skills and efficiency were heavily criticised by an officer of the *Gorgon* but most of the seamen had a "profound admiration and affection for him and were deeply impressed by his humanity, his kindness, his humour, his modesty and above all his courage."<sup>246</sup>

In 1863 the squadron was ordered to transmit instructions to Dr. Livingstone of the intention to withdraw the Zambezi expedition.<sup>247</sup> The naval squadron was to organise a ship to return Dr. Livingstone to England. Livingstone's steamer, the *Pioneer*, would be seconded to the Cape Squadron as it was felt that its shallow draught would be ideally suited to suppressing the slave trade, especially as it was capable of proceeding far up rivers which would otherwise be impenetrable. A Cape ship was to call at the mouth of the Zambezi within three months of Livingstone's receipt of the dispatch.

Livingstone met HMS *Orestes* at Kongone (at the mouth of the Zambezi near Quelimane) on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1864 and handed over the *Pioneer* as per instructions and proceeded to Mozambique Island.<sup>248</sup> He had refused to sell *Lady Nyassa* in Quelimane believing that the Portuguese who sought to buy her would use her for slaving. Instead the *Lady Nyassa* and *Pioneer* were towed by the British cruisers HMS *Ariel* and HMS *Orestes* respectively from Quelimane to Mozambique. Livingstone refused passage on the larger ship (*Ariel*) and preferred to stay on his own vessel in the company of a number of African passengers he had rescued from an abandoned mission. In typical fashion Livingstone sent one of his men who was ill to the larger

<sup>246</sup> Buxton, *Livingstone*, 132.

<sup>247</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A1035, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1863.

<sup>248</sup> G. Clendennen, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal 1861-64*, (Aberdeen, 1992), 85; Buxton, *Livingstone*, 134-6.



ship in his place. On the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1864 a hurricane struck the small flotilla with such force that the engine of the *Ariel* was put out of action and she and the *Pioneer* narrowly avoided colliding. When the storm abated Livingstone finally agreed to travel on the *Ariel*. After a short stop at Mozambique for repairs Livingstone set sail without an escort for Zanzibar. This took seven days. Once he reached Zanzibar Livingstone again attempted to sell the *Pioneer* but was once again unable to assure himself it would not be used for slaving. He had no option but to proceed to India and sell her there (for he needed to sell the *Pioneer* which he had funded himself in order to realise his capital and pay for a passage home). He left Zanzibar on the 30<sup>th</sup> April and only arrived in Bombay on the 12<sup>th</sup> June after a tempestuous voyage. After a low key entrance Livingstone was invited to stay with the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere. The *Lady Nyassa* was sold for £2300 (the proceeds ironically invested in a bank which collapsed) and Livingstone returned to England.

## The Squadron and Southern Africa

The international affairs of the time meant that the Royal Navy's resources were thinly spread and necessitated the assignment of ships to regions where they were of strategic value but could have been put to better practical use elsewhere. An example of this was when Walker was ordered to ensure as far as possible that a ship capable of transporting 500 troops was always present at the Cape. This meant that when his flag ship was away from Simon's Bay another ship from his squadron would have to sit idly in harbour in case it was needed. This was in response to a request from the governor of the Cape, P.G. Wodehouse.<sup>249</sup> The colonial settlements at Natal and in the Eastern Cape were under continuous threat from the Zulu and Xhosa people respectively during this period and this may have been an effort to counter that threat. It may also have been ordered in case reinforcements were needed during the Taiping Rebellion<sup>250</sup> or other Anglo-French expeditions in China.<sup>251</sup> What is clear is that the

<sup>249</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A977, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1862.

<sup>250</sup> The Taiping Rebellion lasted from 1851-64. The Taiping were a group of pseudo-Christian rebels who overran much of Northern China during this period. Their leader, Hung-Seu-Tsien, called himself the Heavenly King and claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ. He had learnt the basis of his beliefs (which he obviously then greatly distorted) from an American Baptist missionary. The Taiping pursued a policy of goodwill towards foreigners and thus for some years the Europeans stood back from their conflict with the ruling Manchu Dynasty (who were against opening China to the 'foreign barbarians'). The Manchu had been forced to open five major ports

Admiralty no longer required the *Orestes* to be kept in readiness for deployment in China after August 1863.<sup>252</sup> The Chinese Station was an important one for the British as evidenced by the fact that many of the most modern and best Royal Navy vessels were assigned to it.

The Portuguese were expanding their area of influence in East Africa during this period and were not overly friendly to British merchants. The traders conducted business with the Zulu Kingdom to the south and people in the interior. It was decided to claim the island of Nyaka as British and part of Natal and for the British flag to be permanently flown there.<sup>253</sup> This was meant to prevent the Portuguese from extending their possessions any further.

Natal was also extending rapidly at this time.<sup>254</sup> A correspondent, the Hon D Erskine, believed that the harbour Durban would overtake Table Bay within two years. His comment that “the colony is going ahead like wildfire if the fools in council will only let it” again shows how bureaucratic meddling was resented and impeded action. Both the breakwaters of the new harbour were in the water and had already seen six ships loads of piles. Erskine believed that the works should be finished in about 3 years (including a fine promenade and an out and out fishing place).

The greatest fear of Natal was invasion from the powerful Zulu Kingdom to the north. On the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1861, Sir George Grey requested a ship with troops and horses to be

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(the ‘treaty ports’) to foreign trade and influence by the Treaty of Nanking (1842) after the Opium War of 1839-42. By the terms of this treaty Hong Kong was ceded to Britain as a naval base. It was only when Taiping forces threatened Shanghai (a treaty port, the largest market for opium and a major outlet for tea and silk) in 1860 that Royal Navy vessels went into action against the Taiping and greatly aided the Imperial Chinese forces. The European forces (England and France) did not wish to establish an empire in China and hence propped up the weak Manchu Dynasty.

R. Pelissier, *The Awakening of China*, (London, 1967), 88-121; Preston & Major, 1967. *Send a Gunboat*, 59-63.

<sup>251</sup> During 1856-64 the British and French launched a number of expeditions aimed at forcing the Chinese to honour the terms of the Nanking Treaty and to curb the rampant Chinese xenophobia. They are sometimes grouped together as the Second China War (1856-60) but due to the fact that the battles were mostly fought between local forces and the foreigners, only on two occasions against Imperial troops and even in support of the Imperial forces against the Taiping I believe that Anglo-French Expeditions is the more correct name. The expeditions against Imperial China resulted in the Treaty of Peking (1860) which opened eleven more ports to foreigners and allowed Western ambassadors to reside in Peking for the first time. Pelissier, *Awakening*, 123-158; Preston & Major, *Send a Gunboat*, 39-58.

<sup>252</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1329, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1863.

<sup>253</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A285, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>254</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder X, Hon D Erskine to Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1861.

sent to Natal as soon as possible to act as reinforcements against the impending invasion by Zulu forces under Cetshwayo which were threatening the north-eastern frontier.<sup>255</sup> In 1856 Cetshwayo and his brothers fought over the succession to the throne near the Tugela, a battle which Cetshwayo won. Fearing certain death three of Cetshwayo's brothers fled the area under Cetshwayo's control. One, Mkungu, fled with his mother to Natal where he sheltered with Bishop Colenso.<sup>256</sup> The British captured two of the brothers, Umtonga and Umgidhlwana, and attempted to send them to a chief friendly to the British in Natal. They escaped and fled to the area between the Drakensberg and the Umzinyati River which was controlled by Cornelius van Rooyen and his followers (Boers). Cetshwayo feared that they would conspire with the Boers to gain control of the Zulu Kingdom as their father Mpande had done to their uncle Dingane. Cetshwayo took an impi to 'persuade' the Boers to release them. Van Rooyen acquiesced and the brothers were executed. This 'act of weakness' emboldened Cetshwayo who intended to pursue a similar course with the British. Numerous incursions into British territories had occurred under the guise of hunting and the colonists had become alarmed. The Zulu King Mpande (the father of all the brothers) warned the British that Cetshwayo was concentrating his forces on the border and intended to send a small mounted force (supplied by Moshesh, King of the Basotho who was an ally of Cetshwayo's) into the colony to either seize or murder Mkungu. Mpande professed that he was powerless to halt 'this mischief' and could only assist by informing the governor secretly.

In reply to the above despatches HMS *Narcissus* (acting Captain Alex Phillips) carried the following reinforcements to Natal: 14 officers and 339 men of the 59<sup>th</sup> Regiment, one officer and 38 men of the Cape Mounted Rifles, four officers and 26 men of the hospital staff, 26 men of the Royal Artillery and 100 men of the invalid depot (a total of 20 officers and 529 men).<sup>257</sup> These reinforcements were unnecessary as Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, met with Cetshwayo, proclaimed British support for his succession to the throne on Mpande's death and defused the situation. The Zulu invasion did not materialise and Natal was

<sup>255</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A285, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>256</sup> C.T. Binns, *The Last Zulu King : The Life and Death of Cetshwayo*, (London, 1963); Duminy & Ballard (ed), *The Anglo-Zulu War : New Perspectives*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1981), 17-21.

<sup>257</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE59, Captain Alexander Philips to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1861.

saved. Cetshwayo was to become world famous after his forces engaged the British at the battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift (1879).

Another incident took place on the West Coast of Southern Africa on an island called Ichaboe. It was 480 miles north of Cape Town and was a good source of guano. A standing naval order was for all ships to search for guano deposits (see appendix A – Cruising orders). In the previous 2 to 3 years Mr Granger and Co. and Mr de Pars, Spence and Co. attempted to assert a monopoly on the use of guano there (which they were attempting to maintain through force of arms).<sup>258</sup> In the interests of peace the British flag was hoisted and bloodshed avoided as the colonial government could control the allocation of resources.

It can be seen therefore that the responsibilities of the Cape Squadron went far beyond the slave patrol. Baldwin Walker's time at the Cape was an interesting one and included historical events which are widely known in South Africa today.

The Cape Squadron made good progress in the fight against the slave trade during Walker's period in charge. The Western Division managed to contain the already dwindling traffic there during a difficult period and the combination of legitimate trade and naval power gave great promise to the future. The Eastern Division achieved remarkable successes for the first time. They succeeded in halving the numbers of slaves exported from Zanzibar and maintained a watchful eye on Mozambique to prevent a resurgence of the trade there. In the long run it was to be argued that the land based traffic could only be halted through colonisation, a process which had already begun in West Africa.

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<sup>258</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.1 A83, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1861.

### **3) Cruises of specific Royal Navy Ships**

The campaign against the slave trade, particularly on the East Coast of Africa, was to a large extent determined by the men on the navy ships and their relationships with other figures of authority. While the Admiralty provided basic regulations and the British government the treaties they had to act under there was a vast scope for independent action and interpretation of policy. By detailing some of the ships' actions during this period I explore how these 'men on the spot' went about performing the task they had been appointed to do.

The first example I shall look at is HMS *Lyra*, under Commander Oldfield. Oldfield and the British Consul at Zanzibar, Colonel Rigby, had a good relationship and together they conducted the most successful operations against the East African Slave Trade that had taken place up until this point.<sup>259</sup> They showed how effective a naval blockade could be when the Foreign Office (Rigby) and the Royal Navy (Oldfield) worked in tandem.

#### **HMS *Lyra***

HMS *Lyra* (under Commander Oldfield) arrived at Zanzibar on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1861. Colonel Rigby requested Commander Oldfield to remain in the port until the Arabs of the piratical tribes<sup>260</sup> of the Persian Gulf had departed.<sup>261</sup> The reason for this was that

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<sup>259</sup> Rigby was an opinionated man and had varied relations with visitors to Zanzibar. His relationship with Commander Oldfield and Captain Crawford (which I examine later in this section) are mirrored by those with John Speke and Richard Burton (the 'discoverers' of Lake Tanganyika). Rigby regarded Speke as a "right good, jolly, resolute fellow." Burton on the other hand was "not fit to hold a candle to him [Speke] and has done nothing in comparison with what Speke has... Speke works. Burton lies on his back all day and picks other people's brains" Farwell, *Burton: A Biography of Sir Richard Francis Burton*, (London, 1963), 174. One could go so far as to say that Burton and Rigby were enemies. An example of this is when Rigby complained to the India Office that Burton had underpaid porters on one of his African expeditions. Rigby had paid the porters the difference and the India Office criticised Burton's handling of the affair and threatened to make him repay the government.

<sup>260</sup> The piratical tribes were composed of a variety of Arab people amongst them the remnants of the Qawasim (whose rebellion in the Persian Gulf had been 'quelled' by the British in 1805), the Suri Arabs and members of the Wahabi Sect. The Wahabi were a radical Islamic group founded in the late eighteenth century that believed in a return to the first principles laid down by the prophet Mohammed. The founder was Mohammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-1791) Today Saudi Arabia is

the sole purpose of their visit to Zanzibar was to kidnap or otherwise acquire slaves (amongst other crimes) and the soldiers of the Sultan were too afraid to control them.

During the season they had already attacked the guard of the customs house and injured several of the men. They attacked and severely wounded four servants of the American Consulate and locked the Consul in his house which they blockaded for the entire day.

Each night they embarked slaves with impunity with one dhow carrying 100 to 150 slaves. Until the arrival of the *Lyra* the entire town was at their mercy and even the Sultan confined himself to the upper stories of his palace to avoid their demands.

When the dhows from the 'piratical tribes' of the Persian Gulf arrived in Zanzibar for their annual Northern slave trade in contravention of treaties signed between Britain and Zanzibar, Colonel Rigby met with their leaders and informed them that their dhows would not be seized if they left Zanzibar for their northern ports within three days, unladen with slaves.<sup>262</sup> The Arab leaders agreed to this pact but numerous dhows attempted to leave with slaves on board, some trying to slip out of the harbour at night, others awaiting weather conditions unfavourable to the cruiser and her boats. Upon approaching some of the dhows, the boats of the *Lyra* were fired upon and they returned fire destroying the dhows and killing the crews. The Arabs were armed with muskets, stones, heavy missiles and bladed weapons (scimitars, daggers etc) and were as usual heavily outgunned by the Royal Navy's boats. A total of sixteen dhows were destroyed. (Please see appendix B for details of these captures)

The efforts of Commander Oldfield and his men to check their slave trade and the capture of many of their dhows broke the spirit of these pirates and most returned from whence they came carrying no slaves and after leaving the harbour submitted to search by the man of war's boats.<sup>263</sup> This was the first year that this trade in slaves had been checked by the Royal Navy and had in consequence been increasing every year previously. Many of the chief Arabs in Zanzibar were involved in this trade in

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dominated by members of this group. Collectively they comprised a major threat to the Sultan of Zanzibar's authority as his troops were intimidated by them and the Sultan often had to pay a ransom to ensure that they returned northwards.

<sup>261</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE54, Colonel Rigby to Walker, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1861.

<sup>262</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE181, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1861.

<sup>263</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE54, Colonel Rigby to Walker, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1861.

clear violation of the treaties. Rigby commended Oldfield and his men for their efforts in what was the most arduous of seasons with torrential rain alternating with stifling heat. Such was their success that they became the 'terror of all the traffickers in slaves on the East Coast'. The *Lyra* was nicknamed 'El Sheitan' (the devil) by the locals.

They had also managed to halt the traffic in slaves carried out by Spanish and French agents under the protection and with full knowledge of the French Consul. The Spanish slaver *Formosa Estrella* after being four months on the coast attempting to procure a slave cargo with no success gave up and returned to Zanzibar. While she awaited a cargo of slaves purchased by a French agent, the French Consul hearing of the impending arrival of HMS *Lyra* warned her of the fact and she escaped before she could be captured (unladen and only days before the *Lyra*'s arrival on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1861).

The evidence presented by Commander Oldfield justifying the seizure (or destruction) of those dhows without slaves on board was that they were carrying slave fittings.<sup>264</sup>

These included:

- 1) Slave platforms made of rattan
- 2) Large coarse mats 14 feet long and 3-4 feet wide
- 3) Large metal cooking pots
- 4) Large numbers of earthenware bowls (for feeding slaves)
- 5) Large bags of coarse rice
- 6) Large water tanks
- 7) Dates, cocoa nuts and calavances of inferior quality (only used for feeding slaves and animals).

This action was clearly very successful. It struck a heavy blow against the northern slavers and if performed annually was sure to have heavily curtailed the slave trade. It must have made the Consul and Royal Navy very unpopular with the Arabs however and may have jeopardised Rigby's relations with the Sultan which were already very strained. Navy ships were forbidden from performing actions within a three mile distance (or the distance a shot could be fired) of the shore in 'civilised states'.

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<sup>264</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE183, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> April 1861.

Assuming that Zanzibar was viewed as civilised (the presence of a Consul would seem to indicate this) the British would have needed the Sultan's permission to conduct these actions, many of which took place in the Zanzibar harbour itself. If they did not have this permission the boats were acting illegally. During the encounter Rigby and Oldfield had managed to obtain the Sultan's permission for "the Captain of the steamer to seize and destroy all vessels which refused to leave" but only after much persuasion.<sup>265</sup> Some Arabs in Zanzibar (many of whom had shares in these slaving expeditions) were likely to have been upset by these actions as I have said but others may have been glad for the imposition of authority on the annual invaders. The fact that the Vice-Admiralty Court at the Cape condemned all eighteen dhows without exception is good evidence for the legal nature of the seizures.<sup>266</sup>

Rigby and Oldfield had a very good relationship as I have stated. So cordial was it in fact that Commander Oldfield and the officers of HMS *Lyra* presented Rigby with a silver goblet "as a mark of regard for his kindness and attention to them while stationed on the East Coast of Africa, and his able assistance in suppressing the Slave Trade carried on by the Arabs from the Persian Gulf in March and April 1861" which

<sup>265</sup> Howell, *Royal Navy and the Slave Trade*, 23.

<sup>266</sup> The Vice-Admiralty Court at the Cape was established during the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795. It was abolished in 1891 and replaced with a civilian Maritime Court. The Vice-Admiralty Court had jurisdiction over all matters nautical including salvage and could rule on the legality of seizures of British and stateless slaving vessels. Sir William Hodges was the presiding judge at the Cape Vice-Admiralty Court from 1858-68. Unfortunately the majority of records for the Vice-Admiralty in Cape Town are now in London having been taken there when the Royal Navy withdrew from South Africa in 1959. <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/shiplaw/oar.html>.

In 1842 an Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission Court was established at the Cape. In the event of a Portuguese slaver being seized a Mixed Commission comprised of a British and a Portuguese magistrate would ascertain the legality of its capture. The Mixed Commission could only try vessels of the nationalities represented. If for example a Spanish ship was captured she would have to be taken to Sierra Leone for adjudication where an Anglo-Spanish Mixed Commission sat. This legal process greatly increased the suffering of slaves captured on the East Coast of Africa although Spanish slavers were rare in that region. The Mixed Commission could not charge the owners, captain or crew of a captured slave vessel and instead handed them over to their own nation for trial. In 1862, after the granting of right of search, an Anglo-American Mixed Commission was established at Cape Town although no vessel ever came before it.

Neither of these procedures applied to Zanzibar shipping however as it applied only to European nations. Dhows were normally sunk on the spot when captured a policy which caused great dispute. It was however near impossible to sail them to Cape Town for adjudication. A Vice-Admiralty Court at Mauritius ruled on the legality of many dhow seizures and destruction (after the event). In very few cases was the seizure of a dhow found to be illegal. To minimise Arab complaints in 1866 a Vice-Admiralty court was established at Zanzibar with jurisdiction over slavers captured in the Sultan's territory. In 1869 it was given full powers of adjudication. L. Bethell, 'The Mixed Commissions for the Suppression of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, VII, 1 (1966), 79-93.



is the inscription upon it.<sup>267</sup> Rigby in turn showed his affection for Oldfield by making him godfather of his daughter Lilian Russel.<sup>268</sup> The cooperation between Rigby and Oldfield had led to the first successful blockade of Zanzibar and dealt a significant blow to the Arab slave trade. Oldfield had made the best possible use of his vessel during a time when the Eastern Division of the Cape Squadron was stretched extremely thin.

The next vessel I examine is HMS *Sidon*, which under the command of Captain Crawford (commanding officer of the East African division at the time), had an extremely successful cruise. She captured seven dhows but the most remarkable aspect of her cruise was the relationship between her Captain Crawford, and Colonel Rigby. This example illustrates I believe how two men purportedly working for the same cause allowed personal animosity between them to harm that same cause.

### **HMS Sidon**

Captain Crawford of HMS *Sidon* and the British Consul at Zanzibar, Colonel Rigby, had a turbulent relationship from the moment Crawford landed at Zanzibar on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1861. The two sides of the story are very different and conflicting.

During his stay at Zanzibar, Captain Crawford was initially accused of four offences by Colonel Rigby:<sup>269</sup>

- 1) **Crawford set loose a number of Arabs in Zanzibar from the slave trading and anti- Christian tribes of the Persian Gulf even after being warned against it by Rigby**
- 2) **Crawford seized a vessel under the Turkish flag and claimed to Rigby that he had done so under the Zanzibar flag.**

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<sup>267</sup> Russel, *General Rigby*, 201n2.

<sup>268</sup> Russel, *General Rigby*, 91n1.

<sup>269</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE47, Colonel Rigby to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1861.

- 3) **Crawford visited the Sultan (in an unusual costume) without Rigby present and accepting presents of considerable value from the Sultan in direct violation of Admiralty orders.**
- 4) **Crawford sent Rigby a 'verbal message of a most insulting tenor' through a junior officer.**

By examining these accusations one can see that they were very serious. In the first Rigby accused Crawford of endangering the peace in Zanzibar despite his counsel, in the second he accused Crawford of lying, in the third of deliberately disobeying orders and in the fourth of a disregard for his authority and of insulting him. By the standards of the day even one of these accusations would have been sufficient to greatly harm a naval career.

Rigby gave a detailed report of his basis for each accusation. I shall examine them one by one.

- 1) **Crawford set loose a number of Arabs in Zanzibar from the slave trading and anti-Christian tribes of the Persian Gulf even after being warned against it by Rigby.**

Upon arrival in Zanzibar Crawford sent Rigby an official letter informing him that he had brought in an Arab vessel carrying the Zanzibar flag together with a number of Arab prisoners captured from other vessels. Rigby replied that as the Zanzibar flag was the plain red one common to all Arab states the vessel most probably belonged to one of the piratical tribes of the Persian Gulf. Rigby did not call upon the *Sidon* personally but informed Crawford that he was ill and could not do so. (Rigby had forwarded a medical certificate to HM Government).

The following day Rigby called upon Crawford and informed him that his captives were of the Suri tribe. Rigby handed over an official letter that the captives were not to be released as this would gravely endanger the lives of the Christian residents at Zanzibar. The Suri tribe had committed the Jeddah massacres and they had had a number of their kinsmen killed in encounters with the boats of HMS *Lyra* (as

described earlier).<sup>270</sup> The Suri practised the law of retaliation (or blood for blood) and Rigby feared that they would murder Christians at Zanzibar out of revenge. The following morning Crawford released all his prisoners who being destitute Rigby believed could only exist through plunder or piracy until the monsoon season opened and they could return northwards.

**2) Crawford seized a vessel under the Turkish flag and claimed to Rigby that he had done so under the Zanzibar flag.**

One of these prisoners Saleh bin Salim, who was master of the captured vessel, *Bashair*, came to the British Consulate the following morning and entered a protest that she was flying the Turkish flag when captured. Upon examination, his documents (register and bill of health) confirmed his claims. The flag commonly flown by Arab vessels was plain red and very similar to that of Turkey. The two could very easily be confused.

The first lieutenant of the *Sidon* reported that he had initially boarded the dhow and confirmed that she was a legal trader. Other junior officers pointed out to Captain Crawford that she was flying the Turkish flag but Crawford rebuked them and seized the vessel. Crawford's boats crew then tore up the flag and 'made turbans of it for their hats' according to the Turkish captain. Rigby informed Crawford as no anti-slaving treaty existed between the Sublime Porte (Turkey) and Britain the seizure was illegal.

**3) Crawford visited the Sultan (in an unusual costume) without Rigby present and accepting presents of considerable value from the Sultan in direct violation of Admiralty orders.**

Captain Crawford, his wife and two officers from the *Sidon* called upon the Sultan dressed in old blue 'undress frock coats' (the men). Protocol required that when a captain wished to visit the Sultan he first contacted the Consul who arranged an

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<sup>270</sup> The massacres at Jeddah (on the Arabian Peninsula and close to Mecca) took place in mid 1858. They were an uprising against the Christian infidels who were defiling the holy cities of Islam with their presence. Among the victims were the British and French Consuls. Farwell, *Burton*, 170-1.

official visit attended by the senior Arabs and many of the Sultan's troops. The British contingent would always wear full dress uniform.

The Sultan is reported to have contacted Rigby the following morning expressing the fact that he had been very much astonished by the nature of the visit and the fact that Crawford had demanded 141 slaves be handed over to him for transportation to a British colony. The slaves had been discovered by Rigby aboard a Somali vessel which hailed from a port outside of the area where slaves could legally be traded and were therefore seized. The slaves had each been given a certificate of emancipation by the Sultan at Rigby's request. Crawford had also taken to communicating with the Sultan through the Nakhoda of one of his ships, Mohammed bin Hamees. The Nakhoda, Rigby reported, was a man of lowest character and was forbidden to sit in the presence of the Sultan (as notables were). Furthermore Rigby believed him to be a French spy. Crawford and his wife had received gifts from the Sultan in violation of Admiralty rules (and Rigby felt that as the Sultan was deeply in debt he could ill afford to do so and might have believed that it would give offence not to present gifts to the commanders of all visiting ships in future). These gifts included a gold and diamond ring, a gold mounted sabre, rosewater and Cashmere shawls.

**4) Crawford sent Rigby a 'verbal message of a most insulting tenor' through a junior officer.**

Upon enquiry as to the whereabouts of Crawford Rigby was 'rudely dismissed by a junior officer' who had been ordered to do so by Crawford. Furthermore Rigby said Crawford paid a private visit to the French Consul with his wife. The Consul, A. Dercke, had never called upon any Royal Navy ship and had not even met with Rigby. He had instead 'intrigued in the vilest manner' and spread rumours that the British Government had paid the Sultan a \$10 000 bribe. The previous French Consul, M. Cochet had also called upon the Spanish slaver *Formosa Estrella* and warned the commander of the approach of HMS *Lyra*. Rigby stated that Crawford's strange behaviour was considered by all classes to be most derogatory to his position and that of all British officers in the eyes of the Arabs.

Crawford claimed that Rigby's actions and slander were an attempt to divert attention from the previous year's events when the Consul instigated Commander Oldfield of HMS *Lyra* to destroy sixteen dhows accused of slaving in the Zanzibar harbour and within sight of the Sultan's palace.<sup>271</sup> He protested that he was in charge of the Eastern Division of the Cape Squadron, a position so distinct as to preclude opposition or interference from the Consul. This meant that Commander Oldfield was under his orders when Rigby persuaded him to commit this violent act against the law of nations and in violation of the slave trade treaty which permitted the trade within certain limits. He accused Rigby of saying "that the treaty was all damned humbug" and of saying that he should have destroyed the dhow or set the crew adrift in irons with one day's provisions.

Crawford accused Rigby of attempting to bring him into disrepute with the Colonial Office and Vice-Admiralty Court which would then be biased in their judgement of the dhow which Rigby claimed to be Turkish. He stated that the threat from the piratical tribes was due to the destruction of the sixteen dhows and the killing of some of their crews.

He accused Rigby of saying some time previously (after HMS *Wasp* sunk) that he was "glad that the *Wasp* was lost as Captain Stirling refused to do the work so ably performed by Captain Oldfield" (who had destroyed the sixteen dhows).

He listed his officers and stated that each and every one would swear that there was no truth in the Consul's allegations. Crawford states that the cargo of the dhow, the *Bashair* was shipped by Mr. de Whitt an intimate friend of Rigby's and that Rigby was thus biased.

Crawford enclosed the letter he received upon arrival from Rigby, urging him not to Consult with the Sultan about destroying the dhows or slaves as the Sultan had been "behaving very badly about this slave trade".

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<sup>271</sup> MSS BC356 A.2.1 AE49 Captain Crawford to Walker 9<sup>th</sup> July 1861

## Crawford's cruise:<sup>272</sup>

- April 2<sup>nd</sup>** Departed from Port Louis, Mauritius under steam
- April 3<sup>rd</sup>** Disconnected steam and made way under sail to conserve coal
- April 8<sup>th</sup>** Sighted Island of Mayotte after traversing the best ground for the suppression of the slave trade. Occasionally used steam in order to reach Zanzibar before start of monsoon
- April 12<sup>th</sup>** Gave chase to the brig *Caridad* of Cadiz which upon boarding was found to have previously been boarded by HMS *Lyra*, *Persian* and *Wasp*
- April 17<sup>th</sup>** Strange sail sighted at 5pm near Port Durnford. Gave chase and captured dhow at 6:30pm. 63 slaves on board and measured 125 tons.
- April 18<sup>th</sup>** Strange sail sighted near Port Durnford at 1:15pm. Gave chase and boats captured dhow at 5:15pm with 111 slaves on board. The crew escaped to the shore and slaves transferred to *Sidon* as dhow leaking. Measured 174 tons
- April 19<sup>th</sup>** At daylight observed sail on horizon. Sent 1<sup>st</sup> cutter and galley in chase. Also sent Lieutenant Shuckburgh in pinnace, 2<sup>nd</sup> cutter and gig to examine Port Durnford. 8 am up steam and gave chase to dhow which turned out to be lawful trader. 9:15am came off Port Durnford after using 8.5 tons of coal.
- April 20<sup>th</sup>** Two Arab dhows captured up the river Durnford by Lt. Shuckburgh. The crews escaped to the shore and both dhows were involved in the slave trade. Measured 97 and 107 tons. Both were leaking and destroyed.
- April 21<sup>st</sup>** 7 am cutter captured dhow after chase. Crew and most slaves escaped to shore. A male and a female slave rescued. Scuttled after measuring 89 tons.
- April 22<sup>nd</sup>** 8:40 am sighted several sails. 9am Gave chase under steam. 10:30 am lowered boats and examined nine dhows. Seven dhows were legal traders. Two captured. The *Bashair* (G. Hamed) 148 tons with 5 slaves

<sup>272</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE63, Captain Crawford to Walker, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1861.

and another (62 tons) with 3 slaves. Both vessels also had a cargo of spice. Took prizes in tow.

- April 23<sup>rd</sup>** Took careful survey of captures and finding them all but the last two unfit for a long voyage ordered them destroyed after taking out all provisions and mats requisite for the slaves.
- April 25<sup>th</sup>** Weighed with several prizes in tow under sail and partial steam.
- May 1<sup>st</sup>** Came to off Zanzibar at 2:45pm. Found three frigates, a brig and one corvette in the harbour belonging to the Sultan. Saluted with 21 guns. Salute returned.
- May 2<sup>nd</sup>** The Sultan sent a present of 2 bullocks, fresh fruit and vegetables to the *Sidon*'s crew.
- May 11<sup>th</sup>** Weighed under steam from Zanzibar. Scuttled *Bashair* after finding her leaky.
- June 10<sup>th</sup>** Arrived at Mauritius.

Six of the *Sidon*'s prizes were condemned by the Admiralty court in Mauritius but the *Bashair* presented some difficulty owing to Colonel Rigby's protestation. (Please see appendix B for details of the dhows captured). The *Sidon* was to head to Johanna where she would hand over command of the East Station to Captain de Horsey of HMS *Brisk*.

From Johanna Crawford proceeded to Simon's Bay where he again attempted to counter Rigby's accusations.

Crawford alleged that Rigby said that as the *Bashair* was captured outside of the Sultan's territory there was no need to bring the matter before him as the Sultan had acted shamefully in not granting Commander Oldfield a written authority to destroy the sixteen dhows.<sup>273</sup> Rigby was further alleged to have said that he had put the Sultan on the throne and that "the Sultan is a fool, and it is time he was dead" and Crawford stated that the colonel claimed to have been ill "ever since the Sultan's visit to the *Sidon* last year owing to my damned over-politeness in taking off my [Crawford's] hat on the occasion and that he [Colonel. Rigby] would not take off his hat to any

<sup>273</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE130, Captain Crawford to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1861.

damned Arab.” Crawford used this statement as reason for going to visit the Sultan independently. He enclosed a sworn statement by all officers (except two lieutenants who were ‘ill’) on board the *Sidon* that the *Bashair* was not flying the Turkish flag and was in Zanzibar waters. He further stated that the visit to the Sultan was not intended to be a state visit but was at the request of the Sultan. He expressed surprise that Rigby claimed that the Sultan’s secretary had come to visit him complaining of the extraordinary nature of the Crawford’s visit as the following morning the Sultan presented Crawford with a sabre. As to the matter of the 140 slaves which had been emancipated by the Sultan and which Crawford wished to transport to a British colony he stated that the Sultan had requested him to transport the apprentices (of whom the Sultan said there were only 130) due to the kind manner in which he had dealt with his Arab prisoners before arriving at Zanzibar and that the Sultan was sure they would be well treated. Crawford claimed that Rigby himself suggested that he transport the slaves as he already had 180 slaves aboard for emancipation in Mauritius.

Crawford further claimed that the Nakhoda Mohammed with whom he communicated was a well educated and intelligent man whom he had never seen intoxicated and who had spent some time aboard the *Sidon* associating with the officers but comparatively little with Crawford himself. Crawford admitted to visiting the French Consul whom he found to hospitable and friendly. He claimed the flag (a mere red piece of calico) was torn aboard the prize during a fresh breeze.

A pass provided by Colonel Rigby was a matter much contested. Crawford stated that it declared that there were no slaves aboard the *Bashair* which was bound for Shahe while Rigby claimed it was bound for Maculla and Jeddah and as such had a right to carry slaves.

The Sultan and residents of Zanzibar had for years endured the slaving visits of the Northern Arabs during the monsoon season. Such was the fear that they inspired that Zanzibaris would move inland in an attempt to safeguard their slaves and children from kidnap. The Sultan’s soldiers greatly feared the northern visitors and in many cases refused to act against their predations. Rigby’s concern over the prisoners’ release then does seem justified. Whether the number released was sufficient to



murder the Christian residents at Zanzibar is questionable as is what their fate was to be if not released. The Sultan was not known for his harsh punishment of slavers and the most that could have been hoped for was that they be imprisoned until the monsoon allowed them to return to their homeland assuming they could find a dhow to carry them since theirs were all captured or destroyed.

If the flag was indeed that of Turkey then Crawford had acted illegally. The Consul had no hesitation in condemning slaving dhows under normal circumstances and I hence find it strange that he would fabricate Turkish nationality to save this one. The fact that two of Crawford's lieutenants did not swear that the flag was a plain red one (and not Turkish) raises grave doubts in my mind as to the truth to Crawford's claim.

A visit to the Sultan without the presence of the Consul was a definite breach of protocol.

Crawford's actions seem as though he resented Rigby's authority and was trying in every manner to rile him. Although officers were permitted to fraternise with the French it was not the usual practice to do so. Crawford refers to the fact that the dhows destroyed were permitted to trade in slaves within the Sultan's African dominions but the fact that the trade was carried on by non Zanzibari citizens meant that this legal slave trade did not apply.

Rigby's health deteriorated after this incident and he left Zanzibar for Mauritius. He had achieved great popularity for his actions against the slave trade (he had personally freed 8 000 slaves owned by British Indian Subjects in Zanzibar) and was later promoted to general. Rigby was subject to some censure by his superiors over the affair and his relations with the Sultan Majid had deteriorated to the point where his use as a diplomat was over.<sup>274</sup> Rigby's actions had greatly harmed the economy of Zanzibar as the Indian residents controlled most of the finance but were unable to profit further from the slave economy. Slaves which were previously used as collateral by the Arabs for loans were of no value to the Indian merchants (who could no longer legally own them) and this source of capital dried up. When Rigby left Zanzibar in September 1861 he regarded Sultan Majid as a "false, vile scoundrel" and

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<sup>274</sup> Bennet, *A History*, 62-70.

received none of the honours customarily given to a departing Consul.<sup>275</sup> The Indians of Zanzibar viewed Rigby's departure as "the termination of a great catastrophe" Rigby had however shown the difference that a single, committed man could make to the campaign against the slave trade.

The lack of unity shown between Crawford and Rigby must have greatly damaged the British reputation in Zanzibar and one can imagine that the French Consul was only too happy to play them off against each other. Crawford greatly exceeded his authority although militarily a captain did outrank a lieutenant-colonel (Rigby).

A court martial was held on board HMS *Victory* in Portsmouth from the 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 1862 to settle the dispute with Rear-Admiral George Grey as president.<sup>276</sup> During this trial Crawford and Rigby attacked each others' characters once again. Crawford who was supported by the officers and men of HMS *Sidon* was cleared of most of the charges levelled against him by Rigby who had few if any witnesses. The court rejected that the *Bashair* had been flying the Turkish flag. Also rejected was Rigby's accusation that Crawford had sent him an insulting message. The Suri Arabs were found to have been landed against the Consul's request but were felt to be of insufficient number to cause a threat to the European residents. Crawford's visit to the Sultan was found to be improper but he was cleared of the charges when he insisted that it had been a private visit. On only one charge was Crawford found to have transgressed regulations, that of receiving presents from the Sultan. The court ruled that it was against Admiralty orders and mildly reprimanded Crawford. Rigby was very upset by the findings and felt he had been treated unfairly.<sup>277</sup> Crawford too was not very happy with the result as both men had staked their reputations on the matter and the court did not fully assign blame.

This incident shows the great problems that could arise between men on the spot used to being in total command of their realms.

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>276</sup> Howell, *Royal Navy and the Slave Trade*, 32-4.

<sup>277</sup> The degree of Rigby's unhappiness with the whole matter is reflected in the fact that there is no mention of the affair or Crawford in Rigby's biography, *General Rigby, Zanzibar and the Slave Trade* (originally published 1935) which was edited by his daughter Mrs C.E.B. Russel (Lilian). Oldfield is mentioned many times in the biography.

## **HMS Gorgon**

HMS *Gorgon*, sailing under Commander Wilson, also had a very successful cruise during 1861. Using information provided to her she captured eighteen slaving dhows. The resulting complaints by the new Consul in Zanzibar, Colonel Pelly, show how necessary it was to have an experienced man in his position.

### **The *Gorgon*'s cruise<sup>278</sup> (August – November 1861):**

**9<sup>th</sup> August** HMS *Gorgon* left Johanna

**10<sup>th</sup> August** Lost jib boom and fore topmast in stiff breeze and in consequence she was forced to get up steam. Wilson commented that the masts of the *Gorgon* were not in proportion to her yards or spread of canvas and for that reason it was almost impossible to beat to windward in a strong breeze.

**16<sup>th</sup> August** Landed passengers at Mozambique

**18<sup>th</sup> August** She captured a large dhow near Querimba Island which was on a reef at the back of the island. The dhow had been chased the previous day by HMS *Penguin*. The 100 slaves she had on board had escaped onto the shore during the *Penguin*'s chase.

**25<sup>th</sup> August** Arrived at Kilwa and collected the boats which had been cruising for a month in the region. The boats had captured 3 dhows, 2 of which were scuttled and the other sent to Zanzibar where Colonel Rigby pronounced her a legal trader despite not having papers or flag.

**1<sup>st</sup> September** Arrived in Zanzibar. It was discovered that the second gig which had last been seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> August had been swamped on the bar of a

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<sup>278</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE253, Commander Wilson to Walker, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1861.

river north of Kilwa. Two of her crew been picked up and were expected shortly at Kilwa.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept**

The boat's crew arrived at Kilwa reporting the third had drowned attempting to reach the shore. The gig had been in pursuit of a dhow and fearing she would be too slow was sent after her quarry under sail with just three volunteers on board. They lost sight of the dhow and attempted to return to Kilwa for two days before capsizing on the bar of a river 1.5 miles from land. The surviving men were well treated at Kilwa and were sent in a dhow to Zanzibar.

Colonel Rigby was taken to Mauritius as he was ill and his affairs left in the charge of the American Consul Mr. Webb until his replacement arrived. Two Arab informers whose lives would have been in jeopardy after the Consul left were also taken to Mauritius.

After receiving information that 40 large dhows were about to depart on the northern journey to the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Muscat and the Arabian coast carrying with them some 4 to 5 000 slaves the *Gorgon* steamed to the most northern watering point and from there cruised southwards hoping to intercept the illegal slavers. Another reason for the formation of this plan was to inquire as to the fate of the passengers and crew of the *St. Abbs* which had been wrecked along the coastline and some of whom were believed to be in captivity near Magadosca. After questioning the local inhabitants it was discovered that although a vessel had been wrecked on the coast some five years before there were no survivors.

**29<sup>th</sup> Sept**

The boats under Lieutenants Harvey and Ross rejoined the *Gorgon* and reported that they had destroyed 11 large slave dhows. Three of these dhows managed to land their cargo on the shore before they could be captured and some put up serious resistance.

Lieutenant Ross reported being attacked on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September by 40 to 50 armed men in a dhow as well as some on land. Under his command at the time were a whaler and a pinnace. The pinnace fired two rounds of grape shot into the dhow with the Arabs on board at which point the Arabs leaped overboard. When the dhow was boarded it was found that one man had been shot. Three further dhows were found concealed near a village close by and all were found to have been equipped for slaving. The interpreter reported that there were some 180 slaves on shore ready to be shipped once the dhows had completed taking on water.

Lieutenant Harvey's party was also attacked after they captured a dhow and responded with three rockets and several rounds of case shot fired from both of their howitzers.

One of the dhows captured had on board two revolvers similar to those supplied to the Royal Navy and bearing serial numbers linking them to the murdered crew of the *Lyra*'s boats.

During one of the captures rough seas and high winds threatened to drive the three captured dhows onto shore. The naval personnel unsure of the best route through the reefs transferred all of the slaves and Arab crew into one dhow believing that this was the best way of ensuring the safe passage of all onboard. The following morning it was concluded that the dhow had got clear as nothing could be seen of her.

Wilson believed that the slave blockade was achieving success as the price of slaves was dropping. When he visited Lamu slave prices there had dropped to \$1 a head. At Zanzibar he reported that boys were sold for \$4-5 each and men for \$8-9. The highest price he reported was for a 'good looking slave girl' of about 18 years who was sold for \$17. If Wilson's information was correct by comparing it with Rigby's report submitted in May 1860 (where an able bodied slave was said to fetch

\$10-35 and boys and girls from \$6-13) we can see that there was a marked increase in supply of slaves or a large decrease in demand.

**15<sup>th</sup> Nov**      The *Gorgon* set sail from the Seychelles for Johanna after resupplying and repairing damage to the sails.

When the new Consul, Colonel Pelly, arrived at Zanzibar he was met with numerous complaints about the *Gorgon*'s actions.<sup>279</sup> Not only were her boats accused of destroying legal traders but her crew was reported to have stolen money and other valuables from the captured dhows. The inexperienced new Consul took these complaints as true and wrote a damning report to Admiral Walker.<sup>280</sup>

The first dhow of which the capture was protested was owned by Ibrahim Valgee, a Banyan.<sup>281</sup> He based his protest on a conversation he stated he overheard between Colonel Rigby and Commander Wilson. Wilson pointed out that as the conversation would have been in English, had it ever taken place, the Banyan would not have understood it and hence his accusation was untrue. Wilson described much of the evidence which Consul Pelly presented as flimsy and untrue. He described how Pelly said that he believed one of the captured dhows to have been a legitimate market boat although he had never inspected it.

Another of the accusations was made by the King of Angoche that he was en route to visit the Sultan of Zanzibar when he was accosted by the Royal Navy, his dhows destroyed and slaves confiscated. This Wilson explained was also untrue as the

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<sup>279</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE279, Major Pelly to Walker, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1862.

<sup>280</sup> Although inexperience played a vital role in determining Pelly's actions he disagreed with many of Rigby's policies and quietly allowed them to lapse. His successor as Consul in 1863, Playfair was accompanied to Zanzibar by Sultan Majid's brother Barghash (who had contested Majid's position on the throne and was defeated by Majid after Rigby and the British came to his aid). He felt that Majid was not sufficiently powerful to compel his subjects to forgo the slave trade and he too encouraged leniency in dealings with the Sultan lest he lose his throne (which would no doubt have gone to one more disposed to slavery). Rigby it seems was ahead of his time with his policies.

<sup>281</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S320, Commander Frederick Hamey to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

Portuguese had recently expelled the King from Angoche for slave trading and he was fleeing to Zanzibar with all of the slaves he could escape with.

A third of Pelly's accusations, Wilson stated, was based on a story supplied to him by Baron Vonderdecken, which the Baron had heard from people Melinda and that the evidence supplied by 5 British officers and 50 men contradicted it.

He explained Pelly's damning report as follows, "that either the proceedings of our boats were very unusual, or that these protests have been made up and palmed off on a new and inexperienced Consul too ready of beliefs." Wilson recommended that Colonel Rigby who had been on board HMS *Gorgon* during the entire proceedings be allowed to give his opinion as he was far more experienced than Pelly.

The Vice-Admiralty Court found that the evidence against eighteen of the dhows destroyed by the *Gorgon* in or near the Zanzibar harbour was incontestable.<sup>282</sup> Only in one instance was the evidence insufficient for an outright condemnation although even in this case there was sufficient evidence to avoid compensation being paid. It was found that all eighteen of the remaining vessels were equipped to a degree for involvement in the slave trade. The arguments of the owners that these dhows were legitimate traders with cargoes on board were dismissed as the presence of a lawful cargo was held not to preclude the illegal use of a dhow. In some of the cases it was believed that the cargoes were destined to be traded for slaves in any case.

### **Other cruises by HMS *Gorgon*:**

One of the *Gorgon*'s boats under Mr Jones, boatswain, captured and destroyed three dhows in the vicinity of Lamu in 1863.<sup>283</sup> One of the dhows had been captured at the entrance of the river leading to Lamu and its destruction had given offence to the Arab authorities there. A letter of apology was sent to the governor who replied that as both of the dhows taken in the vicinity of Lamu were known to be northern slavers the boats had done no real harm. Despite this the destruction of the dhows was in

<sup>282</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE324, Fairbridge to Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

<sup>283</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.4 S745, Commander Wilson to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1863.

direct contravention of written orders given to the boats. Many more dhows would have been captured on this cruise had the boats been faster.

During the cruise a matape was detained.<sup>284</sup> It was in the process of collecting cowries and had been spotted landing a large number of men, women and children who were assumed to be slaves. They were in fact 'cowry pickers'. The matape was wrecked on a reef while being taken for adjudication at Zanzibar. The owner, the chief of Tala, was compensated with £40 which was less than the true value as most of the cargo had been saved. Commander Wilson was ordered to pay the compensation of £40 unless he could give reasonable grounds for suspicion.<sup>285</sup>

These examples show how the legal system worked. The boats' actions were constrained by treaties and if a mistake was made the commander of the Royal Navy vessel involved was held responsible. This said, the amount of compensation demanded was incredibly small compared to the case of the wrongful seizure and destruction of a European slaver. The inexperience of Consul Pelly in the first example led to his accepting the Arabs' complaints as fact. The naval courts were however far less inclined to accept the word (or evidence) of an Arab than they were to believe a European. There is also no doubt that Pelly had a difficult task in assuming the Consulship after Rigby who had succeeded in antagonizing the Sultan and other important Arabs to a great extent.

### **HMS *Ariel***

The cruises of HMS *Ariel*'s boats during March to May 1862 show how much the cruisers relied on their boats to control the slave trade. I use this example as actions of the various boats are described separately. The *Ariel* detached the following boats during this period:

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<sup>284</sup> A matape is a cargo boat similar to a dhow but with squarer hull.

<sup>285</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.4 A1306, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1863.



**Pinnace:** under Sub Lieutenant Clark sailed from Pemba Bay on the 31<sup>st</sup> January and with the exception of the 25<sup>th</sup> March was absent from the ship until the 2<sup>nd</sup> May a period of 91 days. During this time the pinnace covered 1 600 miles, 600 of which were against the monsoon.<sup>286</sup> Clark who was a young and inexperienced officer at the time succeeded in bringing back his boat's crew in excellent health and spirits, having made 4 captures, assisted in 3 others and 7 others escaped capture due to the fact that a 26 feet boat, overloaded with armament was no match for a fast sailing dhow. One fatal casualty resulted during the capture of a slaver.

**Cutter:** under Mr Fellowes, midshipman, sailed from Zanzibar on the 26<sup>th</sup> March and rejoined the ship on the 4<sup>th</sup> May at Magadosca (40 days) a distance of 800 miles. Two captures were made during this time.

**Whaler:** under Lieutenant Fairfax between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March worked 120 miles of coast on the north coast of Madagascar. Between the 26<sup>th</sup> March and 17<sup>th</sup> April she cruised from Zanzibar to Waseen, a distance of 600 miles.

**1<sup>st</sup> Gig:** under Mr Fellowes, Midshipman, she worked the coast between the Chesterfield Bank and Majinga (NW Coast of Madagascar) a distance of 750 miles between the 2<sup>nd</sup> February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> March. In one attack on a slaver three casualties out of a crew of five occurred. Another two full slavers were chased but the gig was outrun by the swift dhows.

During one of the chases the crew of a dhow laden with slaves were seen to throw their cargo overboard where they struggled to swim through the heavy surf to the safety of the beach. Mr Fellowes who was in charge of the cutter at the time ordered it to risk sailing over the reef in order to save some of the slaves who were drowned. The gig and cutter both proceeded over the reef nearly getting swamped. The gig was ordered to catch hold of the dhow's line but she was already in the breakers and was falling to pieces so she was cut loose. Numerous Somalis were gathered along the beach and began to attack both boats with spears and arrows. The slaver's crew (Suri Arabs) also opened fire on the boats with muskets and attempted to grab hold of the gig which was very near the beach. The cutter kept up heavy covering fire while the

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<sup>286</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE323, Wakeford to Walker, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

gig escaped. There were no casualties aboard either vessel but the gig had been pierced in several places by spears which the Somalis hurled with great force. The Somalis were believed to have lost a large number of men as numerous bodies were observed on the beach and within the breakers.

**2<sup>nd</sup> gig:** under Mr Fellowes, midshipman, while cruising on the coast near Majunga was beaten off from a slave vessel near Bembatook Bay.<sup>287</sup> The vessel was boarded and held for about ten minutes by Mr Fellowes and four of his crew. The boarding party was attacked with knives and spears by the dhow's crew of about 30. After three of the boarding party were wounded they were forced to abandon the dhow and her cargo of approximately 30 slaves, mostly children. The leader of the Arabs was said to be Amisiri, the same man who had led a "murderous" attack on the crew of HMS *Lyra* in 1858.

### **Action of HMS *Ariel* herself:**

The *Ariel*, under Commander Oldfield (who had earlier commanded HMS *Lyra*), cruised to Madagascar after launching her boats. A dhow was destroyed by HMS *Ariel* in the harbour at Majunga, Madagascar, at 3am on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

Commander Oldfield apologised for acting in this manner in the territory of King Radama II who had during his short time on the throne shown his desire that the very friendly relationship that existed between the great Radama (his father) and Britain, including the suppression of the slave trade. (Radama had signed a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade with Britain in 1817).<sup>288</sup>

In the previous ten days at least two if not three vessels had landed slaves at Majunga and Oldfield requested the governor of Majunga either to destroy these vessels or to deliver them into his hands (no doubt to do the same). He also requested that the slaves landed also be delivered to him although not as insistent on this point. When the governor was not forthcoming on these demands he threatened to destroy the

<sup>287</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S409, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1862.

<sup>288</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S429, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

largest of the slave vessels in the harbour as a warning. The destruction of the before mentioned dhow was the result. Oldfield stated that had he not heeded Radama II's territorial rights he would have destroyed the other two slave dhows lying in the harbour at that time.

From Madagascar the *Ariel* returned to Zanzibar to pick up some of her boats. There she seized a dhow with 54 slaves on board in the northern entrance to Zanzibar harbour. The vessel was found with Arab colours and a pass bearing the signature of the sultan. The matter was reported to the Sultan through the British Consul and the Sultan stated that he felt the seizure was fully justified as the slavers were not his subjects and thus had no right to the pass they bore. As the accommodation on board the *Ariel* was unfit for the slaves, the captured dhow was refitted at the expense of the captors and sent to the Seychelles under Lieutenant Blount where after landing the slaves she was to be burnt being unfit for passage to a port of adjudication.<sup>289</sup> On the 25<sup>th</sup> another dhow was caught with 84 slaves on board by the pinnacle of the *Ariel* near Zanzibar.<sup>290</sup>

After leaving Zanzibar the *Ariel* cruised south towards Ibo, the notorious slaving island in Portuguese territory. A slave dhow was captured with six slaves off the northern point of Pemba. She bore an out of date pass (dated 1857 although the master claimed it was from 1861) but was destroyed primarily because she was under of the command of northern Arabs who were not permitted to possess a pass, valid or not.<sup>291</sup>

After completing this cruise the *Ariel* headed northward to cruise along the coastline of Somalia (Somaliland). There her boats spotted a dhow filled with approximately 100 slaves and gave chase for two hours before the dhow ran on shore. This was at a point some 16 miles north of Brava. Very heavy surf prevented the ship's boats from freeing the slaves and the gig was swamped in the process. The crew were attacked by the slavers and locals on shore and had to withdraw. The dhow was destroyed with cannon fire. One slave was rescued.<sup>292</sup> Another dhow was captured near Brava. She was boarded by Lieutenant Blount in the whaler and was found to be fully fitted for

<sup>289</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S431, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

<sup>290</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S432, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

<sup>291</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S437, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

<sup>292</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S439, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

slaving and in the possession of Northern Arabs. The crew attempted to rise against Lieutenant Blount but the arrival of the gig made them surrender.<sup>293</sup>

HMS *Ariel* captured yet another dhow near Brava with 100 slaves on board. The dhow possessed neither papers nor colours and was the property of the Northern Arabs. The slaves who were shipped at Lamu and were being conveyed to the Persian Gulf consisted of 26 men, 10 women, 55 boys and 9 girls. The dhow was destroyed being unfit for sea.<sup>294</sup>

HMS *Ariel* returned south to cruise along the coastline of the Sultan of Zanzibar's African dominions. A dhow was seized after a fight in the harbour of Mombasa with the governor's permission by the *Ariel*'s pinnace and cutter on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1862.<sup>295</sup> There were some 40 to 50 Suris aboard. Three naval men and five or six slavers were injured. The dhow was destroyed after it was found that she had no flag or papers. Information was obtained that a further two dhows had recently loaded slaves and sent them north.

Another dhow was seized on the same day north of Pemba by the *Ariel*'s whaler on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1862. She was found with four slaves on board and was about to ship another 150. There was also slaving equipment aboard.

The whaler seized another dhow on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1862 in Brava Roads. She was outfitted for slaving and was believed to have been one of the slavers that had left Mombasa recently before.<sup>296</sup> The cutter and Pinnace attempted to capture a dhow with 35 slaves on board but she sank in heavy swell before she could be captured. All but one of the slaves fell into the hands of the Somalis.

HMS *Ariel* continued to cruise the coastline but the change in weather meant that no vessels were captured for some time. The boats of the *Ariel* under the command of Lieutenant Fairfax captured two slave dhows in the river St. Antonio (lat 16° 8'S long 40° 12'E) on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1862. The first capture (at 3pm) was condemned due to her

<sup>293</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S440, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

<sup>294</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S442, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1862.

<sup>295</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S460, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1862.

<sup>296</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S461, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1862.

being equipped for the slave trade and the second (at 4pm) landed some 60 to 80 slaves on approach of the boats (and was equipped for slaving). An attempt was made to liberate the last two boat loads of slaves but this was unsuccessful as the slaves were driven into the bush before they could be 'freed'.<sup>297</sup>

The pinnacle of the *Ariel*, under the command of Lieutenant Dunlop, destroyed two dhows off the island of Pemba.<sup>298</sup> The first of these was sighted on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1862 but before she could be boarded she ran on shore and a large number of people were observed to flee from her, taking the sail with them. She was destroyed by fire after being found to be fitted for the slave trade. The second dhow was spotted at anchor in Port George and on boarding she was found to be deserted and to be fitted out for the slave trade. The *Ariel* was commended by Admiral Washington for being of great assistance to David Livingstone in November 1862.<sup>299</sup>

HMS *Ariel* and her boats had a very successful year. The area that she and her boats covered was phenomenal and the large number of captures is proof of the efficacy of this policy. Her boats were detached for very long periods which far exceeded the two weeks maximum laid down in the Admiralty rules (see appendix A – cruising orders). This must have placed a great strain on the men involved but they performed admirably. A number of the boats experienced stiff resistance from the slavers they were attempting to capture. This fact necessitated that they be heavily armed. Had they not had this requirement the boats would have been much lighter, faster and would have caught more slavers (and managed to 'rescue' more slaves before they were put ashore).

## **HMS Penguin**

The cruises of HMS *Penguin*, tender to HMS *Narcissus*, and under the command of Lieutenant McHardy, provide a somewhat different view of the life on a cruiser.

<sup>297</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S500, Commander Oldfield to Walker, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1862.

<sup>298</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.4 S670, Commander Chapman to Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> December 1862.

<sup>299</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Washington to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1862.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1861 HMS *Penguin* seized a dhow under Portuguese colours 12 miles off Querimba Island. There were eleven slaves on board as well as slave irons. The dhow was destroyed as she was not seaworthy.<sup>300</sup> While at Rovuma, eight of the slaves ran away leaving only three children. The Vice-Admiralty court ruled that under the circumstances the detention was justified but the destruction was not. The vessel the *Flor de Cabeceira* had previously been involved in legitimate trade and the eight slaves were in fact her crew as was detailed in her papers.

A year later HMS *Penguin* anchored off the town of Melinda after observing two dhows anchored there.<sup>301</sup> After landing near the town (the shoals prohibited closer approach even by the boats) Lieutenant Price communicated to the locals that the wished to speak to the governor of the town about four Muscat dhows that were rumoured to be in Melinda refitting before proceeding northwards to Arabia with slave cargoes. After seeing 20 or 30 Muscat Arabs “prowling about with muskets in their hands” Price ordered 20 armed men landed and informed the governor that if any resistance was offered he would hold the town responsible. Upon examination the smaller of the two dhows proved to be a legitimate trader but no trace could be found of the master or crew of the larger one. Upon searching the larger dhow she was found to be empty but a trail of footprints from her led to two large tanks hidden nearby as well as a slave deck. This dhow was burnt. The governor upon further questioning admitted that the dhow had brought slaves to Melinda along with three others which had since proceeded northwards towards Lamu, laden with the slave cargo of all four after being repaired.

HMS *Penguin* detained a dhow on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1862 near Monfia Island.<sup>302</sup> The *Penguin* then proceeded northwards after escorting the dhow to Zanzibar and launched her boats in search of more dhows. After her engines failed and being unable to maintain a position under sail the *Penguin* returned to Zanzibar, leaving her boats to cruise and intercept dhows. After arriving in Zanzibar, the *Penguin* received a request from Consul Pelly to transport him to the Seychelles as a result of his poor

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<sup>300</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE185, Lieutenant McHardy to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1861.

<sup>301</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S360, Captain Bickford to Walker, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1862.

<sup>302</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S572, Lieutenant McHardy to Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1862.

health. This is the first evidence of the *Penguin*'s tendency to break down. By 1864 she had to be retired for major repairs (and replacement of her boilers) to Bombay.<sup>303</sup>

### **Massacre of boat's crews:**

HMS *Penguin*'s cutter and whaler were attacked by a group of Somalis near Bareda (near Cape Gardafui) and their crews massacred on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1862.<sup>304</sup> The boats were despatched under Lieutenant Fountaine to cruise for slave dhows. When they did not arrive at the appointed rendezvous the *Penguin* despatched a native dhow with officer and interpreter on board to make inquiries (the *Penguin*'s engines being out of order). The dhow returned without information and further enquiries were made. Shortly afterwards the *Penguin* encountered HMS *Semiramis* which had on board Captain Playfair, the assistant Consul at Muscat who was making enquiries after receiving information that two British boats' crews had been massacred along the coast.<sup>305</sup> The vicinity of the massacre was ascertained and the Sultan's presence requested. Pieces of the crews clothing and a still smouldering piece of the cutter were recovered.

A Somali, Ismail Sadek Somar, questioned near the site of the massacre gave the following account of the events which he had not witnessed himself but had heard other people talking about:

"The two boats put into Ras Maaber for water, whether they received it or not he could not say but the boats opened fire on the Somalis causing them to run away. One boat remained at anchor close to the beach while the other went ashore and asked for water. The Somalis asked for money which the sailors promised to give and were shown the way to a 'well'. Seeing no sign of a well the sailors threatened the Somalis and when a larger group approached a fight ensued. One of the sailors struck a man with his sword and then all the British took to flight. They abandoned their boat and swam out to the larger one. The

<sup>303</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral F Grey to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1864.

<sup>304</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S608, Lieutenant McHardy to Walker, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1862.

<sup>305</sup> MSS, BC356 A.1.3 A1017, W.G. Romaine to Walker, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1863.

Somalis pulled the smaller one up onto the beach. It is said that one of the Somalis was killed.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> September the larger boat again approached the coast this time near Bareda and asked for water. The Somalis showed them to a well and allowed them to fill their five water casks. When they had loaded three of the casks the Somalis asked for money. This the sailors agreed to and loaded the other two casks. Somar continued, "Three Somalis then went on board and demanded the money, the sailors refused to give any, one of them pointing to his penis, said they might have that." Then the sailors took up arms and ordered the Somalis to leave. One of the Somalis was wounded with a sword and a struggle ensued. Five sailors were killed in the boat and three Somalis fell. The other Somalis pulled the boat right up onto the beach. The boat was anchored with a rope which the Somalis had used to pull the boat onto the beach. The remaining ten sailors jumped into the sea, one swimming to a cape some distance down the beach the other nine being drowned. The surviving sailor met a man named Saleh Mohammed of Allooda. This man protected the sailor and attempted to arrange a passage for him on a dhow to Allooda. Unable to do so the sailor was entrusted to three Somalis for the same purpose and the party made for Allooda via a road a little way from the beach. Shortly after embarking on their journey the men encountered some of the same people who had massacred the boats' crews. They killed the surviving sailor and beat up the escorting Somalis."

When the Sultan arrived the following reparations were demanded:

- 1) That he should deliver up as many of the murderers as possible.
- 2) That the Sultan and elders of the tribe should come on the quarter deck of HMS *Semiramis* and express their sorrow and beg for pardon for the foul massacre that had been perpetrated by their subjects.
- 3) That all arms and plundered property that could be found should be delivered up

The Sultan agreed to these demands after hesitating slightly at accepting the second. He requested ten days to comply. After ten days the sultan produced eight of the murderers and two rifles, a pistol and a cutlass. The Sultan stated that only fifteen



Somalis were present at the time of the massacre but three had been killed by the sailors, two had escaped the coast on dhows and two were still hiding in the hills. Playfair replied that he had come to keep peace and not to act as a soldier and that his terms were as follows:

- 1) The Sultan was to cause the eight murderers to be executed within sight of the ships
- 2) The ships would then leave for thirty days (as the Sultan said their presence was a hindrance to catching the murderers) and that when they returned if twelve more of the murderers were not immediately turned over all of the Sultan's towns would be destroyed.

The Sultan requested six weeks to comply instead of thirty days which was granted. The executions were observed and by questioning some of the condemned it was ascertained that eighty or ninety Somalis were present at the massacre. This confirmed that the doubts the ships' men had that the fifteen Englishmen who had been murdered could have been killed by an equal number of Somalis were correct. Nevertheless it was argued that the Sultan's show of good faith in executing the eight meant that he should be allowed the six weeks to capture the others. The *Penguin* proceeded to Zanzibar to pick up her boats that awaited her there and from there to Aden to recoal and rearm in case reparations were demanded.

There is no record of whether HMS *Penguin* (or any other vessel) returned to exact further reparations from the Somalis. It would seem probable but perhaps after consideration of the Arab informant's account it was felt to be true. The antagonistic manner in which the boats' crews were said to have acted was ample provocation for an already tense situation to escalate into open violence.

The cruisers had a fearsome reputation and it was not surprising that the locals were not disposed to trust or help them. An example of this lack of trust was shown when HMS *Penguin* was sailing northwards from Zanzibar and she spotted four dhows on the horizon.<sup>306</sup> The dhows appeared to be fleeing northward so the *Penguin* raised steam and gave chase. Once abreast of the dhows they turned sharply and proceeded

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<sup>306</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.4 S787, Captain Barnard to Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1862.

southwards. Upon boarding them the dhows proved to be legal traders, all of them with passes from the Sultan of Zanzibar. They fled the cruiser out of fear.

### **HMS *Pantaloön***

The short cruise of HMS *Pantaloön* shows the risks faced while sailing in uncharted or poorly charted waters amongst shallow reefs. The *Pantaloön* was a new addition to the squadron and was meant to be a superior class of vessel to the others. She was faster and more manoeuvrable but these traits did not help her in the situation which follows.

HMS *Pantaloön* left Simon's Bay on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1861 and anchored at Port Natal on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1862 for the purpose of reporting that the money allocated to the ship was £1 000 short. The *Pantaloön* proceeded from Port Natal to the river Zambesi where she was to attempt a rendezvous with David Livingstone. No trace of Livingstone was found. From there she cruised up the coast to the Angoche (Angoxa) Islands and then to Johanna (Pomony) where she arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1862. She left there on the 29<sup>th</sup> January and cruised from Ibo northwards in compliance with Commander Oldfield's orders. She dropped weights to ascertain the depth of water at various points along the coast as the waters were still fairly unknown.

The boats were to be deployed to sweep along the coast but before this could happen the *Pantaloön* ran aground on a reef along the coast in light winds on the 5<sup>th</sup> February. The boats were launched, water dumped and shot thrown overboard in an attempt to lighten the vessel and lift her off the reef. The topmast and reef were lowered to prevent the ship rolling but the following day the sea began to rise with waves crashing into the vessel making her roll and grind heavily on the reef. The BB anchor was carried astern and cast off as soon as the tide gave enough depth of water. The crew then attempted to heave the ship off the reef, the engines working at the same time. On the second attempt the anchor chain parted and the tide flooded into the ship blowing the boilers out. The crew continued to lighten the vessel by throwing bilge and keel pieces overboard into the boats. At this point the log, public money and ships books were landed ashore under an armed guard. The whole time the ship was heeled

heavily to starboard with her deck opposed to the sea. The guns were therefore hoisted over the port side and slung between the pinnacle and cutter which were lashed together with a spar. The crew continued to lighten the ship by burning coal, landing shells and provisions. The gig was sent to Pemba Bay to seek the assistance of native dhows but was unsuccessful. The keel and post broke off.

The local people who had been watching the floundering ship for almost two days by this stage began to approach the supplies which had been landed and fearing a surprise attack the commander ordered the ships company landed although (as is stated in this report) he had no intention of giving up the ship. Fearing great loss of life if the company were landed at night and realising that the ship would not withstand much increase in the swell the commander elected to remain on board himself with the master and engineers and stokers who were on duty. The ship lay on the reef for a further two days with efforts being made at every high tide to heave her off.

On the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> February the ship suddenly heeled about 15 degrees to starboard at about 3:30 am (high tide). She slowly increased her heel. The ships company embarked at 5 am and a dhow which was rendering assistance brought sails and rigging on board. Three more dhows arrived from Ibo to render assistance and numerous attempts were made to drag the *Pantaloön* off the reef. Eventually on the 12<sup>th</sup> February the ship was afloat again although gaining water at the rate of 15 inches per hour. The *Pantaloön* was slowly sailed to Pemba Bay with only a makeshift topsail. Lieutenant Sinclair was dispatched to Mozambique in a dhow with a letter for the Consul or senior British officer there. Finding neither in residence Sinclair delivered the letter to the Portuguese governor who ordered the Portuguese steam gun vessel *Maria Anna* to assist the *Pantaloön*. The *Maria Anna* arrived on the 20<sup>th</sup> February and rendered valuable assistance with the carpentry and blacksmith work. By the 23<sup>rd</sup> the *Pantaloön* was ready for sea.

The *Maria Anna* and HMS *Pantaloön* sailed in convoy to Mozambique where they arrived on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The ships company were given two days rest and then preparations were made to beach the vessel to repair the damaged hull.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March HMS *Orestes* arrived with the Portuguese ship *Don Fernando* under tow as she had been dismasted in a storm. HMS *Pantaloön* eventually left Mozambique on the 10<sup>th</sup> April under the tow of HMS *Orestes* bound for Bombay where her boilers and more major repairs would be undertaken.

Her bottom was extremely hammered and Captain Gardner of HMS *Orestes* expressed surprise that her leakage was not greater.<sup>307</sup> Had she had a wooden bottom she would no doubt have sunk. It was believed she would take approximately three months to repair. In June 1862 her crew was ordered to England to be paid off.<sup>308</sup> She was expected to take a further four months in dock to be repaired. She was to be replaced on the squadron by HMS *Rapid*. In response to Walker's queries on the matter, Admiral Washington replied that while it was possible to provide a survey vessel for the colony's coast (Cape and Natal), a survey vessel for the Rovuma Area (near where the *Pantaloön* had run aground) was out of the question as there was too much risk of disease for the men and the area had too little traffic.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder XVII, Captain Gardner to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

<sup>308</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Grey to Walker, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

<sup>309</sup> MSS, BC356 Box 3 Folder I, Admiral Washington to Walker, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1862.



### Other noteworthy cruises:

The conditions experienced on board a Royal Navy vessel during an anti-slaving cruise depended very much on the specific circumstances. The examples that follow give a good idea of the variance in these conditions. As in the above examples, the ships were often isolated and the men in charge had to make difficult decisions for which they would later have to take responsibility.

One such instance involved Commander Stirling of HMS *Wasp*. The *Wasp* captured a slaver the *Rebecca Theresa* sailing under Portuguese colours near the Cungo Islands with 14 domestic slaves and slave equipment on board on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1861.<sup>310</sup> She was thus in violation of the Portuguese-British treaty. She was taken as a prize. On the 12<sup>th</sup> March upon arriving at Johanna the *Wasp*'s hull was surveyed and found to be unsafe to undertake a voyage without an escort. Stirling decided that as the captured vessel too was unseaworthy it was against the principles of humanity to risk the lives of her crew and slaves in HMS *Wasp* and instead gave them the option of departing in their own vessel. Without exception they accepted the offer and departed.

One example of how the slavers avoided detection was when HMS *Falcon* (steam sloop) captured a slave brig, the *Flight of Boston*, with 539 slaves on board at latitude 3 55 S Longitude 14 41 W on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1861.<sup>311</sup> The circumstances were as follows:

- 1:50 p.m.      A sail was sighted heading westwards
- 2:45 p.m.      The vessel hoisted American colours.
- 4:10 p.m.      Two blank guns were fired which the vessel ignored.
- 5:20 p.m.      The *Falcon* closed within hailing distance and directed the brig to heave to. The master, an American, replied that he would not stop for any British man of war. Suspicious, Commander Heneage warned the master of the consequences of not heaving to and after the brig still refused to comply three shots were fired into the sails and rigging. Disabled, the brig surrendered.

<sup>310</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE57, Commander Stirling to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1861.

<sup>311</sup> MSS, BC356 A.2.1 AE103, Commander Heneage to Walker, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1861.

6:30 p.m.      A boarding party under Lieutenant Mallet was sent across and found the brig to be named the *Flight of Boston* and to have no papers to prove her nationality. She had 539 slaves, a mixed crew of 14 and 5 passengers on board.

The brig was despatched to Sierra Leone with the surgeon on board to care for the slaves who were mostly healthy. The captured vessel was fitted out in Havana and had procured her cargo in the Congo before returning towards Cuba. No information was received leading to the capture of this slaver and her name did not appear on the suspected list.

Commodore Edmonstone on forwarding this letter to Walker attached the following comment. "I cannot but draw your attention to the very improper course pursued by Commander Heneage in connection with the capture of the *Flight*. As it is my intention to caution that officer to be more careful in his future dealings with vessels when flying the American colours. I trust such a recurrence will not take place."

In my estimation Commander Heneage was very lucky that the vessel was not released and that he was not forced to pay compensation. If the vessel had proven to have proper papers Heneage would have caused an international incident and would have lost his commission if not his career. The Royal Navy was very strict with the adherence to international law on the West Coast of Africa but was somewhat less so when dealing with Arabs on the East Coast. It was fairly common for a slaver to attempt to use French or American colours to shield herself from Royal Navy inspections. It was a great risk for a naval commander to search the vessel or even to ascertain the legitimacy of her papers. Another instance when the risk proved worthwhile was the capture of a Spanish brig by HMS *Torch*.

HMS *Torch* captured an unnamed brig of Spanish design which was equipped for slaving.<sup>312</sup> The brig it was thought intended to load her slaves at Magua Grande. She initially raised French colours but when a boat was sent to check the legitimacy of

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<sup>312</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S445, Commander Smith to Commodore Edmonstone, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1862.

their use they were lowered and thrown overboard. She was sent to St Helena for adjudication.

In many cases slavers were able to purchase 'legitimate' papers from corrupt officials, particularly the Americans in Cuba and the French in the Indian Ocean. In these cases, as with ships that were actually of either nationality, all a Royal Navy vessel could do (and then even at a push) was to inspect the legitimacy of the papers (see appendix A – cruising orders for the procedure to be followed when boarding a vessel). If the papers proved to be legitimate the navy had to leave the vessel regardless of whether it was filled with slaves crying out for help or not. Both America and France regarded their independence as being of paramount importance with humanitarian issues such as the slave trade being of secondary magnitude.

By this time, especially with the civil war in America, steps had been taken to prevent American ships from outfitting for slaving. The next example shows one way which was found around this.

HMS *Griffon* while off black point (lat 5° S long 11° 45' E) observed a barque and small schooner sailing in company at about 4pm on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1862.<sup>313</sup> As the *Griffon* approached the schooner made sail and stood in for the land, the barque sailed out to seaward. A cutter was lowered and sent to head off the schooner while the *Griffon* laid chase to the barque. The barque was boarded at approximately 6pm and was found to be without name, papers or colours and was fully equipped for the slave trade. From the crew it was ascertained that she had left New York on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1861 and sailed to Campeche in Mexico where she loaded most of her slave cargo. She was to have shipped 800 slaves the following morning at Blackpoint and was to convey them to Puerto Rico. She was approximately 300 tons. At 7.30 pm. Lieutenant Acklom returned on board having seized the schooner after she was abandoned by her crew. The schooner was also equipped for slaving and being unseaworthy was measured and scuttled. The barque was sent to St Helena for adjudication.

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<sup>313</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.2 S469, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1862.



Other slavers picked up slave fittings such as shackles when they loaded their slaves in Africa. To supply this demand the slave factories imported blacksmiths and other craftsmen.

A problem facing the Royal Navy was the lack of adequate punishment for people caught slaving. Britain had declared it piracy which carried the death penalty but other countries, especially Portugal and Spain, were lax in imposing penalties. Portugal for instance exiled slavers to Mozambique which obviously greatly spurred the growth of the slave trade there. The following example shows the extent of this problem.

HMS *Espoir* detained a barque which had no colours and no name at Lat 6° 45' S Long 12° 25' E on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1862.<sup>314</sup> The barque was fitted out for the slave trade having a slave deck capable of holding 900 slaves. A prize crew was detached and her crew of Spaniards and Portuguese transferred to the *Espoir*. The vessel was fitted out in Cadiz and was to have embarked her slaves at Mecula. The master of the barque, a Portuguese, said that he had been slaving for twenty years during which time he had been captured six times and had successfully shipped slaves five times.

A similar situation existed with Arab slavers. HMS *Rapid* captured a dhow near Zanzibar with 42 slaves on board.<sup>315</sup> The slaves were shipped to the Seychelles, while the crew was put on another dhow heading northwards at their own request. The dhow herself was scuttled not being seaworthy.

A more extreme method of evading capture which was prevalent on the East coast was not common on the West Coast. When a navy vessel was sighted the slaver would attempt to flee and if it was not possible to escape would head for the shore and disembark the slave cargo. The slaves were then marched inland and hidden. The naval men would not often venture far from their boats as this left them very vulnerable to ambush and exposed. An extreme instance of this tactic (and one which took place on the West Coast) is detailed in the next example.

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<sup>314</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S535, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1862.

<sup>315</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.4 S778, Commander Jayo to Walker, 21<sup>st</sup> May 1863.

HMS *Mullet*, a sloop, sighted a schooner and gave chase until she ran aground in high swells near Point Padron.<sup>316</sup> The following morning the whaler was despatched to ascertain what information she could from the schooner. To the crew's surprise there was no trace of her except many footprints and other markings in the sand. On questioning some local people it was learnt that the slaves had been marched inland and pieces of the ship had been dragged off the beach as it broke up in the surf. Some of the slaves who were injured when the schooner's mast fell were rescued from the surf but others drowned. About 150 slaves were marched inland. This tactic would of course not have been viable with a larger vessel.

The navy depended heavily on information provided by the Foreign Office and informers. An example of the use of informers was when HMS *Antelope* captured a cutter with 203 slaves on board near Cabinda on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1862.<sup>317</sup> She had no papers or colours and was captured due to information gained from a native informant. The captain stated that she had been fitted out as an American barque, the *Joshua Bragdon*.

As the Royal Navy became more effective in their patrols the number of slaves shipped declined greatly. It thus became uneconomical for the slavers to maintain large slave barracoons or factories. This made the task of finding sufficient slaves for those who were slaving far more difficult as the following examples show.

HMS *Wye* captured the schooner *Concepsio* with 296 slaves on board near the river Congo.<sup>318</sup> The schooner had neither flag nor papers. The slaver was headed for Cuba where her master said that 6 or 7 ships were involved in the same trade some of them American. Slaves were reported to be in short supply in the factories at the time as although slaves could be procured in large numbers the European agents avoided purchasing too many to minimise the cost of their upkeep. This meant that it was difficult to purchase large numbers of slaves in a short period of time.

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<sup>316</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S570, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1862.

<sup>317</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S538, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1862.

<sup>318</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S536, Commodore Edmonstone to Walker, 27<sup>th</sup> July 1862.

Another vessel that encountered a similar problem was the *Bolador*.<sup>319</sup> HMS *Zebra* captured this American built clipper near Black Point without papers or colours and fully equipped for the slave trade. She was burnt as she was judged to be rotten and unseaworthy. On questioning her crew it was discovered that she was from the north coast of Cuba. She had been waiting off the coast for about 20 days while her cargo of slaves was collected.

By way of comparison I include excerpts from the cruise of HMS *Castor* which was made famous by Captain Sullivan's book, *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters*.<sup>320</sup> This cruise took place barely ten years before the period I have studied but the lack of experience and local knowledge are clearly apparent. The *Castor*'s was one of the first dedicated anti-slaving cruises undertaken in the Indian Ocean by the Royal Navy.

### **Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters**

Captain Sullivan joined HMS *Castor* in May 1849. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> June of that year the *Castor* sailed from Plymouth for the Cape where they arrived on the 29<sup>th</sup> August. The *Castor* was detained at the Cape due to the convict dispute there. (The convict dispute arose when residents at the Cape realised that Britain intended to make the Cape a convict colony similar to Australia. When a ship full of convicts arrived at the Cape the residents there refused to supply provisions to it and other British shipping until the Colonial administration scrapped their plans. The administration capitulated, the ship was sent to Australia and supplies resumed). From the Cape the *Castor* departed for Madagascar and Angoche in Mozambique.

At Angoche the boats were launched and tasked to explore the river there and investigate the extent of the slave trade. The Arab fortress which protected the nearby slave barracoons was felt to be too strongly defended to risk attacking. The boats consisted of the *Castor*'s pinnace (under Lieutenant Campbell, 20 men, 12lb gun) and barge (under second-master Albert, 15 men, 3lb gun) and the *Dee*'s first paddle boat

<sup>319</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.3 S594, Commander Hoskins to Commodore Edmonstone, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1862.

<sup>320</sup> G.L. Sullivan, *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters and on the Eastern Coast of Africa*, (London, 1968) (reprint) This book gives an informative and entertaining view of life on board a Royal Navy vessel on the slave patrol.

(under second-master Jones, 18 men, 18lb gun), second paddle boat (under master's assistant Dyer, 18 men, 18lb gun) and a gig (under Lieutenant Crowder who commanded the expedition) and a cutter (under Dr. Evans). I describe the strength of the party in detail as a way of estimating the strength of the Arab presence on the coast. The power of the Arab sultanates had increased tremendously since the Portuguese had first arrived in the region and routed the Arab defences with a few ships and cannons. The fort at Angoche had successfully repulsed an attack launched some years previously by two Portuguese regiments and assisted by the boats of HMS *President* and *Eurydice* (Royal Navy ships). The fort had six large guns mounted on it and a force of about 2 000 men.<sup>321</sup>

On approaching the fort a dhow was spotted and upon approaching it the stockade opened fire on the naval party. It was decided to destroy the dhow after her crew fired on the boats (this being felt to be sufficient justification to destroy her without examination). Within fifteen minutes the fort's guns were silenced by accurate bombardment from the *Castor*'s pinnace (which was the only boat capable of firing spherical case shot). The occupants of the fort fled into nearby woods from where they continued to fire muskets at the boats. Grape and canister shot from the *Dee*'s boats kept the defenders at bay while the dhow was set on fire. With this the boats retreated to a safe distance and to avoid being stranded when the tide went out. They set up camp on a nearby island and awaited the return of the ships.

The *Castor* was unable to capture any dhows during this first part of her voyage. Sullivan attributed this to inexperience of the crew, the orders given to them (which were designed for the West Coast trade and intended for use against large western slave ships e.g. the equipment clause) and their inability to converse in Arabic. With time the Royal Navy recognised these problems and altered policy accordingly. This resulted in specific orders for the east coast of Africa and the use of guides with knowledge of the region and local languages.<sup>322</sup>

The Arab slavers were adept at evading the Royal Navy's attention and slaves being transported were often disguised as crew or domestic slaves (who could legally be

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<sup>321</sup> Sullivan, *Dhow Chasing*, 24-7.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 54-69.

carried). Furthermore it was common practice for passengers to pay the negoda (captain) of the dhow by bringing a slave with them to be sold at the northern destination. These methods were useful in concealing smaller numbers of slaves but when the number of slaves on board increased to over a hundred a combination of methods had to be employed. This involved designating as many as possible of the males as crew and passengers, each of whom (and the Arab masters) was allocated a “wife” (or “wives”) for the duration of the journey. The slaves were clothed in keeping with their assumed identity to maximise the chance of deceiving the navy. The dhows’ papers were written in Arabic which meant that the navy were usually unable to establish their legitimacy without an interpreter. An experienced officer or interpreter could establish with a few simple questions (such as “where do you come from?” and “how did you get there?”) whether the slaves on board were in reality domestic slaves or pretending to be. Interpreters who did not usually share in the prize money allocated to the rest of the crew had little incentive to be honest and many are believed to have been in cahoots with the slavers. In many cases a dhow would attempt to distract the navy’s attention by giving false information about some three masted vessel (European style vessel) nearby whose capture would be far more rewarding (financially and in prestige) for the crew.

At the time of Sullivan’s cruise on the *Castor* the Royal Navy was primarily concerned with stopping the European and American slave trade (which was not very large in the Indian Ocean) as the full extent of the Arab trade was not yet known.<sup>323</sup> The squadron for this reason was assigned only three ships (and outdated ones at that) at this time. The Indian Navy was meant to be controlling the area north of the equator but due to politics and the prevailing sentiment in this navy they were very ineffectual in achieving their aims. (This reluctance stemmed from a case where the courts of justice in Bombay deprived a captain of a navy ship of his command in order to ensure that the evidence his officers gave was not affected by his position over them. The court case was to determine the legitimacy of the navy’s capture of a slaver. It is reported that after this case Indian Navy ships would steer away from dhows rather than risk having to condemn them.)

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 77.

Inexperience greatly affected the Royal Navy's efforts in curtailing the slave trade at first. An example of this occurred when the *Castor* attempted to raise the barracoons at Keonga and liberate the slaves held therein. The *Castor* in her haste attempted to sail into the town in broad daylight but misjudged the tide and had to anchor within sight of the barracoons until the tide had risen enough for the men to disembark. Thus while the crew breakfasted, the slavers hid all their slave cargo in the interior where the navy men would struggle to find them and would be hesitant to venture (as it was away from the safety of the boats).

From this chapter we can see that enforcing the slave trade treaties was a time consuming and difficult process. 'Men on the Spot' were given a great deal of freedom and only basic instructions. Conflict between these men such as in the case of Captain Crawford did great disservice to the cause but was perhaps an inevitable consequence of placing so much authority in the hands of a few men. Cooperation between the Foreign Office and the Royal Navy led to the greatest successes yet known against the slave trade. Through this cooperation the Foreign Office provided the information which the Royal Navy could act upon.

The Eastern Division of the squadron was more successful during Walker's tenure than at any time before which is a testament to his leadership (even if he was thousands of kilometres away). His tireless appeals to the Admiralty for more and better ships bore fruit and he allowed his captains enough freedom of action to get the job done.

## **Conclusion:**

The British campaign against the slave trade was a very difficult task and by any standards a mammoth undertaking. The frugality of the treasury and the Admiralty's need to maintain a superior strength worldwide naval presence meant that the resources that could be allocated to the slave patrols were very limited. This meant, particularly on the East Coast of Africa, that the vessels on the patrol were spread very thinly. This resulted in the Commander-in-Chief at the Cape having to decide which areas to focus on as it was simply not possible to effectively patrol the entire coastline (which on the East Coast was 6 000 km long and there were seldom more than four ships assigned to the slave patrol). Cooperation with the Foreign Office which provided much of the intelligence required to make these decisions and the establishment of networks of informers were key to the Cape Squadron's success. The successes achieved by the squadron during Baldwin Walker's period of command are a testament to his leadership and the quality of the men in the squadron.

Why though did Britain undertake the suppression of the slave trade? The two competing arguments put forward at the time were that it was begun for humanitarian reasons or in an attempt to extend Britain's influence and benefit her economically. From the evidence studied in this dissertation it would seem that neither argument is wholly correct and that Britain's motivation was rather a combination of the two factors. There can be no doubt that the moral crusades begun in the late eighteenth century had great public support and therefore great influence with the government of the day. Initially the focus for the suppression of the slave trade was on West Africa due to the fact that the enormity of the East African trade was unknown. Thus by the 1840s much of the external West African slave trade had been suppressed, public interest waned somewhat and the issue slipped from prominence. It was only in the late 1850s and 1860s when attention was drawn to East Africa by merchants and explorers reporting the horrors of the slave trade there that the public began to push for suppression once again.

Around this time a number of books of first hand experiences of men on the slave patrol were published greatly increasing the information available to the public and

romanticizing the difficult task they undertook. This motivated at least some of the men on the slave patrol to apply for the difficult posting. Other men on the slave patrol applied for their postings due to the large bounties offered for the capture of slaves and slave ships. An example showing the size of this remuneration was when Baldwin Walker's successor, Admiral King, confided in him that he was unsure whether his Admiral's salary would be sufficient to sustain him without the addition of the slave prize monies which Walker had received but King would not due to the amalgamation of the Cape and East Indies Stations (please see section 2 – Baldwin Walkers life at the Cape for more information).

There can be no doubt that Britain used the slave patrols to extend her influence in the regions they patrolled and to minimize the influence gained by other nations, particularly France. The humanitarian concerns involved with slavery were always limited by economic expediency. Thus when Britain captured a vessel laden with slaves she transported these prize slaves (or recaptives as they were sometimes known) to one of her colonies and forced them to work there as 'apprentices'. It was argued that it would be too expensive and well nigh impossible to repatriate them to their homelands from where they might simply be enslaved once more. Attempts were made to place some of them under the care of missionaries on the African mainland but these too tended to form a cheap labour force. Freed slave settlements such as Sierra Leone were not successful. Another aspect of this argument is that Britain was reluctant to undermine the stability of a region in Africa and its economy by 'prematurely' freeing the slaves there. Thus when she colonised East Africa the slaves there were only freed in 1907 almost a century after Britain had abolished the slave trade. She also ignored the fact that the legitimate trade that she was so anxious to substitute for the slave trade consisted of the fruits of slave labour. This too was true of the tropical produce such as sugar which she imported from slave plantations in the new world.

It can be seen then that Britain's motivation for suppressing the slave trade was a combination of both factors. Although initially inspired by humanitarian concerns, as the reality of the size of the task she had set herself became clear the economic and diplomatic advantages that could result gained importance. Yet without a doubt



Britain's campaign greatly hastened the end of the slave trade (although in some areas it continues today).

The slave trade was by its very nature an international exercise. Slaves captured in Central Africa were marched to the East Coast by Arabs and from there were sold to vessels which took them northwards to Arabia and India, around the Cape to Brazil and Cuba and to the French colonies in the Indian Ocean. Although most European nations professed to be against the slave trade in reality colonial officials in many cases turned a blind eye to or were actively involved in the slave trade which benefited their colonies. The rivalry between France and Britain greatly hindered the suppression of the slave trade particularly as they struggled for influence in the Indian Ocean region. Britain's patronising relationship with Portugal likewise harmed the suppression efforts.

Britain's attempts to substitute legitimate trade for the slave trade during this period achieved moderate success. Plantations were established in West and East Africa to supply the products the European (and American) markets desired. The unfortunate truth however was that these plantations were worked by slave labour. Britain overlooked this fact feeling that African slavery was benign and necessary for the maintenance of order and the economic *status quo*.

The attitudes of Britain and the Royal Navy towards different nations varied greatly. The illegal seizure of a European vessel would result in the captain responsible being forced to pay a huge amount of compensation and in all probability losing his commission. When seizing an Arab dhow however in very few cases was compensation ordered for an illegal seizure and the vessel was not even required to be brought before a Vice-Admiralty Court for adjudication. Dhows were in most cases destroyed where they were captured (after being measured for prize money). Great contempt was held for the honour of Arabs who were held to be liars and thieves. The incident in section 3 where HMS *Penguin's* boats' crews were massacred by Somalis was (if the account of the incident is correct) caused by the arrogance and aggression of the Royal Navy sailors. To a lesser extent too the attitude of the British towards the Portuguese was patronising and harmful to cooperation.

The interaction between the various 'men on the spot' both Royal Navy and Foreign Office men differed greatly. Cooperation such as between Commander Oldfield and Colonel Rigby allowed some of the most remarkable successes against the slave trade during this time period to be achieved. Friction between Colonel Rigby and Captain Crawford greatly harmed the British cause and gave the slave traders (and French) great satisfaction and hope in their struggle against British influence. The difficult conditions under which the men were serving necessitated regular changes in personnel both Royal Navy and Foreign Office. The unfortunate result of this was that inexperienced men were often placed in difficult circumstances with negative consequences for the suppression efforts. An example of this was when the newly appointed Consul Pelly condemned the actions of Commander Wilson in destroying slaving dhows where a more experienced man may have supported Wilson's actions. The lack of effective communication meant that great responsibility was thrust upon the shoulders of the 'men on the spot' with the risk of censure by their superiors for incorrect decisions ever present. This problem existed for all men in positions of authority from the men in charge of the boats to the Commander-in-Chief at the Cape.

The period of Admiral Walker's command was in the midst of an era of great technological change in the Royal Navy. The use of steam power was common on the ships and larger boats of the Slave Patrol. Steam power greatly aided the Royal Navy vessels in their pursuit of the fast slaving vessels employed in the Atlantic slave trade. The lack of coal depots limited their effectiveness however particularly in East Africa. On the East Coast steam was relied upon solely as a source of auxiliary power and could only be used in emergencies due to the limited supply carried aboard ship. In their pursuit of dhows the Royal Navy relied upon stealth, strategy and superior fire power instead to capture the slavers. The boats of the Slave Patrol were always heavily armed which slowed their speed but enabled the men on board to defeat superior numbers in a confrontation with slavers. The disbelief expressed by the Royal Navy that the crews of HMS *Penguin's* boats were massacred by a similar number of Somalis is an indication of the high regard in which the fighting skills of the Royal Navy's crews were held. The artillery carried by the Royal Navy vessels was a formidable threat to their foes and the Slave Patrol made good use of 'gunboat diplomacy'. A Royal Navy vessel was able to anchor near a town and impose Britain's will on the residents through threat of bombardment while being safely out

of the reach of the town's inferior guns. During the period of this study the unreliable, breech loading Armstrong guns were in service on the Slave Patrol. These were vastly inferior to their French and German counterparts and were prone to a range of faults. The Armstrong's were withdrawn from service in 1865 and replaced by the traditional muzzle loaders for the next fifteen years. The introduction of iron hulls and copper bottomed ships greatly strengthened their structures. An example of the benefits this resulted in during this period was when HMS *Pantaloön* (which had a copper bottom) ran aground near Pemba and managed to continue to float when she was eventually dragged off the reef some ten days later. A vessel with a wooden hull would most likely have sunk had it run aground under similar circumstances. The Cape Squadron was for the most part assigned inferior vessels however which limited the advantages gained from the technological advances of the time.

Admiral Walker was an effective Commander-in-Chief of the Cape Squadron. He was a very experienced Royal Navy man having served throughout the world during his career. The experience he gained while stationed on the South American and West African Stations (both of which were involved in the suppression of the slave trade) during the 1820s was of particular importance as it allowed him to have a good idea of the difficulties experienced by the men under his command on the Cape Squadron. The influence he gained while Surveyor of the Navy (1848-60) meant that he had more success than his predecessors in having his requests for better ships granted. Walker was adept at manipulating accounts and used this skill to find funding for the improvements necessary at the Royal Navy base in Simonstown. He acquired buildings, a steam crane and supervised the construction of the Roman Rock light house while in command at the Cape.

Walker's understanding of the advantages offered by the new naval technologies and designs resulted in the Cape Squadron being able to put these advances to good use. Under Walker's command new forms of preserved food and ship's biscuit underwent trials. His captains experienced the inadequacies of the Armstrong guns first hand and reported their findings to him. Walker reported these to the Admiralty and his negative comments no doubt had some influence on their withdrawal from service in 1865.

The initial reason given for Walker's appointment to the Cape was his poor health. This appears to have improved somewhat by the time he left in 1864 as evidenced by the fact that he only died twelve years later in 1876 at the age of 74.

Under Admiral Walker's command the Cape Squadron achieved some notable successes in the suppression of the slave trade particularly on the East Coast of Africa. Commander Oldfield's blockade of the Zanzibar harbour in conjunction with the efforts of the British Consul there, Colonel Rigby, for the first time gave hope that the annual northern slave trade might be severely curtailed if not halted. The numbers of slaves exported from Zanzibar during the period of this study fell dramatically according to Rigby's replacement as Consul, Colonel Playfair. He stated that in August 1861 19 000 slaves had been imported into Zanzibar (an indication of Northern demand) but by August 1863 only 12 000 were imported. It was believed that the numbers would continue to fall dramatically if the Royal Navy Slave Patrol continued their strong presence in the region. Further evidence of success in suppression efforts came from the fact that the price of slaves in Arabia had soared to over \$300 a head by 1864, while in Zanzibar the price had fallen to \$6-20 each (as opposed to Colonel Rigby's estimates in May 1860 of slaves in Zanzibar fetching \$10-35 each).

A notable development during this period which greatly aided in the suppression efforts was the United States finally granting Britain the right of search of her shipping in 1861 (The Washington Treaty was signed the following year on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1862). This left only France's shipping (of the Western powers) immune from Royal Navy search.

The Royal Navy's success in curtailing the seaborne slave trade had the effect of encouraging the slave trade on land. The rise in prices in Arabia and lower prices in Zanzibar and on the African mainland meant that the profits possible from the trade increased greatly. This led to higher mortality rates and suffering being endured by the slaves who were forced to march long distances and were crammed in greater numbers onto slaving dhows than before. The increasing prevalence of the land based trade was to be used as one of the reasons for the European colonisation of Africa.

The men of the Cape Squadron performed a difficult task under trying conditions. The success the Slave Patrol achieved was remarkable considering the vast area they had to patrol with so few ships. Under Baldwin Walker's command the squadron made notable achievements against the slave trade on the East Coast while maintaining a strong presence on the West Coast and continuing the campaign which had begun over half a century before.

University of Cape Town

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix A – Cape Station cruising orders – Eastern Division**

One of the major problems facing men serving on the East Coast Division was that there were no specific instructions issued by the Admiralty to them. They were referred instead to the instructions issued for service on the West Coast but the conditions of service were very different. Thus when a new crew or captain began to serve on the East Coast inexperience and a lack of local knowledge greatly hindered their suppression efforts. In late 1863 Captain Alan Gardner, the senior officer on the East Coast at the time, compiled the following instructions in an attempt to fill the void.<sup>324</sup> I quote them verbatim as they are interesting and give a good account of the difficulties facing the men on the East Coast Slave Patrol.

#### **1) Vessels not to visit:**

You are not to visit any vessel under a foreign flag on the high seas, on suspicion of slave trade except in virtue of special authority under treaty or in case you have reason to believe that the vessel has no right to claim the protection of the flag she bears.

#### **2) What vessels not to search:**

You are not to search any vessel whether British or Foreign lying within the jurisdiction of any foreign civilised state without formal permission of the local authorities.

#### **3) How to bring vessels to:**

You are never without necessity to resort to coercive measures for bringing vessels to, and you are to be cautious never to occasion further deviation from the course that the

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<sup>324</sup> MSS, BC356 A.3.5 S1001, Captain Alan Gardner to Walker, 26<sup>th</sup> December 1863.

vessel is steering, than a due regard to the service on which you are employed may require and you will bear in mind, that in every case and in all stages of the proceedings, it is highly important to cause the vessel visited as little delay or inconvenience as possible consistent with the effectual discharge of the duty to be executed.

**4) Not entitled to have boats or papers brought:**

You are not entitled to insist that a boat shall be sent to you from a vessel that has been brought to, for the purpose of being visited, or that any person(s) shall come, or that any papers shall be brought on board HM Ship upon such occasion.

**5) Officer to appear in uniform:**

On visiting suspected vessels the officer sent on board is to be in proper uniform, and of the rank required by the treaty or instructions under which the visit is made; and the boat in which he goes is always to carry a British flag and pendant and he is to be provided with documents confirming authority to visit and search. i.e.:

- 1) An attached copy of the warrant given to the captain to carry into effect the treaty.
- 2) Certificate stating his rank.

These documents must be shown to the master of the vessel prior to any search being made.

**6) Papers to be inspected before search:**

Before an officer proceeds to search a vessel, the minutest inspection is to be made of her papers and every information checked which can be obtained by enquiries courteously made, as by this means the necessity of a search may be avoided.

**7) Crew to remain in boat unless ordered out by officer:**

The crew of a boat sent to visit a suspected vessel are never to leave their boat unless ordered to do so. The officer is never to order them to do so unless imperatively required for the purpose of search.

**8) Not to remove any person:**

Neither the master nor any other person on board the vessel is to be removed during the search without their consent.

**9) If not seized:**

If there is no ground for suspicion or seizure everything is to be replaced as quickly as possible and the vessel permitted to pursue her course.

**10) Complaints to be made in writing:**

Before the officer quits the vessel he is to ask the master whether he has any complaints to make of the manner of the search, or upon any other ground, if he has, then the officer is to request him to state the particulars in writing (which statement is to be forwarded to me). In all cases of visiting such vessels the officer is to enter in the log of the vessel a statement of his proceedings on board, noting the exact time he was on board, the object of his search and sign his name to the same: this is not to be done unless the master of the vessel wished it.

**11) Report particulars:**

The visiting officer is on every occasion to report in writing immediately (whether the vessel be seized or not) all the particulars whilst fresh in his memory, which statement is to specify, whether any complaint was made by the master or any other person on board the vessel. This statement is to be entered in the log, and a copy of it with your own remarks is to be forwarded to me.

**12) Detention:**



When you have determined to detain a vessel you will immediately notify the same to the master and cause a careful search to be made for all papers and documents on board, and take them into your possession, causing them to be numbered and described on a list which you will sign. The papers voluntarily given must be distinguished from any which have been concealed. If any have been destroyed or thrown overboard, the nature of the papers as far as you can find out should be inserted on this list and the person cognisant of the fact must be sent with the vessel to make affidavit thereof to the court of adjudication. If there are no papers, an affidavit of that fact must be made at the trial.

### **13) Money etc. How to be disposed of:**

Money and other valuables found on board you will take a note of and sign the same and have it duly witnessed to be produced at the trial. You will take care to keep the articles in safe custody to be brought before the court.

### **14) Disposed of crew:**

Whenever arrangements may be made for the disposal of the crew of a captured vessel, the master and two persons at least of the crew must be sent together with the vessel to be produced at court as necessary witnesses in every case. One of the persons should be the chief mate, supercargo or boatswain.

### **15) Instructions to officer in charge:**

The officers in charge of a detained vessel must have directions in writing for his conduct during the voyage.

### **16) Crew to be placed on board:**

You will place under the officer in charge a crew sufficient for the safe conduct of the vessel, with provisions for the voyage, giving him strict orders for the preservation of the ship, her cargo and everything on board, for the prevention of embezzlement, of excess or irregularities of any sort.

### **17) Officer in charge to keep safe custody of the papers:**

The officer in charge will keep in safe custody during the voyage all papers found on board with other necessary documents for adjudication and on his voyage he will endeavour to obtain by every proper means additional information as to the case, which he will be careful to note for information at the trial.

### **18) Inventory of stores etc.:**

The officer in charge as soon as possible after he has gone on board the vessel is to draw up with the assistant of the master an inventory of stores, furniture and the cargo of the vessel as far as it can be ascertained without disturbing the stowage, and should it be practicable, the cargo is to be secured by sealing down the hatches. The inventory is to be made in duplicate and signed by both the officer in charge and the master of the vessel and one of these documents is to be retained by the officer and master.

### **19) Slaves on board:**

If slaves should be on board every effort is to be made to alleviate their suffering and improve their condition by a careful attention to cleanliness and ventilation and by separating the sickly from the healthy, encouraging the slaves to feel confidence in Her Majesty's Officers and men and promoting amongst them cheerfulness and exercise.

### **20) Landing Slaves:**

The Officer in charge of a captured slave ship will be warranted in landing the slaves or transferring them to other vessels, whenever such measures should be absolutely necessary, but not otherwise and in such circumstances a certificate of all the circumstances must be drawn out and taken with the vessel to the place of adjudication. In most cases of seizure under treaty, this contingency is provided for: under some treaties the slaves must be carried eventually to the port of adjudication.

Reference on this as on other points must be had to the treaty or convention applicable to the case.

**21) Log to be kept:**

A log is to be kept by the officer in charge of the detained vessel from the time he goes on board until he is relieved of his charge, in which he is to note all perceptible changes in the state, quantity and position of the cargo.

**22) Crew to be well treated:**

The master and crew or such part as may be left on board a detained vessel are to be well treated and not to be subjected to further restraint than may be requisite for the execution of the service entrusted to the officer in charge, but it will be necessary to guard against recapture, to prevent which, the officer, as soon as he goes on board the detained vessel will take care that the hatches leading to the sleeping quarters of the crew are so secured that only one man can get up at a time.

**23) Report of seizure to be made:**

In all cases of seizure and detention a full and accurate account of everything captured and destroyed, and the disposal of the same is to be sent together with the report of the case by the officer in charge to the senior officer present in duplicate, who will transmit the same to me.

**24) Duplicate to be sent to Admiralty:**

In the event of an earlier communication being made to the Admiralty than would otherwise reach that board through me, a duplicate of the report is to be made and forwarded by such opportunity to the secretary of the Admiralty of which circumstance I am to be informed.

**25) If the vessel is wrecked or run on shore:**

If the vessel at the time of capture should be run on shore and wrecked or afterwards lost or abandoned the slaves, stores, cargo etc. that can be saved and transported are to be taken to the port of adjudication together with the necessary witnesses. All papers which may be found are to be carefully preserved and an affidavit of the facts must be made as the foundation of the proceedings before the court for trial of the case. When there are no slaves on board the equipment or such part thereof as are saved should be carried to the port of adjudication for the purpose of supplying the evidence of the slave trade.

**26) Port of adjudication: manner to act:**

On arriving at the port of adjudication of the officer in charge it to make himself acquainted with the course of proceedings in the court before which the vessel is to be tried.

**27) Officer to Consult agent at Cape Town:**

Mr Christian at Cape Town, having been appointed agent to the ship, the officer in charge of vessels proceeding to the Cape of Good Hope for adjudication will take the earliest opportunity of Consulting with him as to their further proceedings.

**28) How to deliver over charge of prize:**

On giving over the vessel to the person authorised by the court to receive her, the officer in charge is to produce the inventory drawn up by himself and the master and he is to request that a receipt may be given for all the articles determined in the inventory excepting of course where any deficiencies may appear, and when that is the case he will report the source thereof to the court and to his commander on his return to his ship.

**29) Officer to attend at Court of Adjudication:**

The officer in charge will give his best attention to the court for the due adjudication of the case and upon judgement being given will immediately report in writing to me

his proceedings and the judgement of the court and in my absence from the Cape will send a duplicate of that report to the Admiralty by the first opportunity.

### **Instructions for boat cruising**

#### **1) Treaties:**

Most of the European states and all of the American powers have made treaties with us for the suppression of the slave trade – France and Turkey have not done so.

#### **2) Seizure:**

By these treaties we are empowered to seize vessels carrying slaves, or with certain fittings showing that they are about to engage in the slave trade i.e.:

- 1) Hatches with open gratings
- 2) Divisions in the bulk heads in the hold or on deck not used by vessels in lawful trade
- 3) Spare planks fitted for laying down a slave deck
- 4) Shackles, bolts or handcuffs
- 5) A larger quantity of water than is necessary for the crew of a merchant vessel
- 6) An extraordinary number of water casks or vessels for holding liquid unless the master has a certificate from the customs house
- 7) A great number of mess tubs
- 8) A boiler of unusual size
- 9) An extraordinary quantity of rice, maize or farina unless entered as part of cargo
- 10) A quantity of mats unless part of cargo

#### **3) Forms:**

The forms to be observed in approaching, visiting, searching and seizing these vessels are given in the foregoing instructions.

#### **4) Vessels having no papers or colours:**

Vessels having no colours and papers or the colours of a nation not recognised as a power, such as one of the smaller Arab chiefs, may if found engaged in the slave trade be treated as a British vessel in that trade, and English courts of the Admiralty have power to adjudicate in such cases.

#### **5) Vessels under French Colours:**

Vessels under French Colours must not be interfered with in any way, unless there is strong reason to suspect that French colours are fraudulently assumed to cover a vessel of another nation engaged in the slave trade, and when a French vessel is visited under such suspicion, the reason for doing so must be reported to the secretary of the Admiralty. In making such a visit under these circumstances great caution must be observed not to give offence.

Dhows under French colours with regular papers from the commandants of Nossi Be or Mayotte cannot properly be seized even if carrying slaves, but if I came across one on the African coast laden with slaves, and with regular papers I would take the vessel over to Mayotte in order either to bring the matter home against the French authorities or get them to repudiate the vessels papers.

#### **6) Portuguese dhows:**

Portuguese dhows are allowed to carry domestic slaves from port to port in the Portuguese dominions but they should be described in the vessel's papers as such.

Great caution must observed with dhows under Portuguese colours suspected of being involved in the slave trade, unless there is a strong case against them it is better to leave them alone, for they must not be sent down to the Cape.

#### **7) Zanzibar treaty:**

The Sultan of Zanzibar is bound by treaty to prevent the export of slaves from his dominions, but his subjects have the right of carrying slaves within his territories which extend from Lamu (lat 2°10'S) to Mikindamy (lat 10°S). Dhows having slaves on board within these limits must have regular papers to show their nationality and a port clearance describing the number of slaves in their cargo. Without these they are liable to seizure and are to be taken to Zanzibar for the inspection of HM Consul and the Sultan's officers.

#### **8) Arab and Zanzibar dhows:**

Arab and Zanzibar dhows beyond these limits with slaves on board or with evident slave fittings are to be seized, and if it be not possible to take them to a port of adjudication, they are to be destroyed after being measured.

#### **9) Ensigns to be hoisted:**

Ensigns are to be hoisted on approaching any vessel.

#### **10) Officers to board in uniform:**

Officers to board in uniform and not to allow their men out of the boats, unless by their special order, and they are to guard especially against any pilfering of vessels boarded.

Great courtesy is to be shown to the master and crew of the vessels that may be visited.

### **Routines and Discipline:**

#### **1) Rations:**

For the preservation of health and the well being of men detached in boats, it is desirable that an exact discipline shall be maintained, and a routine established and kept up, as far as compatible with the service on which the boats are employed.

## **2) Cook:**

The cook is to be turned out early enough to have breakfast ready by dawn, by which time the awnings are to be folded, and the boats got ready to go after anything which may be in sight.

## **3) Breakfast:**

After ample time for breakfast, prayers are to be said, and the boats (if at anchor) got under weigh. The men are then to clean their boat, their arms and themselves, change clothing, hang up night clothing, awnings etc. to dry and spread sun awnings.

## **4) Observations:**

Officers to take observations and work their reckonings, write up their logs etc.

## **5) Dinner:**

Dinner at noon and supper at five.

## **6) Rowing:**

Give the men rowing twice a day for exercise if not for service.

## **7) Lookouts:**

Make the boat as safe as possible at sunset and shift clothing. Always have a lookout by day and a watch by night of one or more men armed according to the circumstances.



**8) Sleeping:**

Officers and men are to sleep in their boats.

**9) Landing:**

Great caution must be observed in allowing men out of the boats, for it must be borne in mind that the natives of the coast where we are employed are generally hostile to us.

**10) Watering:**

Every opportunity must be taken to fill with water.

**11) Fresh provisions:**

Fresh provisions may be purchased on the paymaster's account and issued in lieu of salt: an exact account of purchases must be kept.

**12) Quinine:**

Quinine to be issued according to the surgeon's instructions.

**13) Gun:**

The gun is to be frequently mounted and dismounted for exercise.

**14) Smoking:**

Smoking is not to be allowed all day but only in the regular smoking times as on board the ship.

**Instructions for measurement:**

All measurements of vessels seized as prizes are to be made according to the new merchant shipping act 17 & 18 etc. cop. 104 otherwise the bounties will not be paid. In the case of dhows having any cargo in, it will be sufficient to measure the length of the upper deck from stem to stem inside of each, then extreme breadth outside the planking, then girt around from level of deck outside under the keel to opposite side on the same level.

### **Medical Instructions:**

Boats crews should be provided with blanket clothing for sleeping in, and good shoes in case of requiring to land for provisions or water. Every morning after sunrise the clothing should be shifted and the blanket clothing aired and dried before being stowed away.

Bathing in the sun or during the heat of the day should not be permitted.

Time arrangement should be made for the calls of nature and time given after breakfast for this purpose.

Go to breakfast as early as possible, if anything causes delay; serve out a cup of warm tea or cocoa.

When near land, although the space in the boat may be small and the men crowded it is not prudent to allow any sleeping out of the boat, and the boat should be anchored some little distance from the shore, mosquitoes will be less troublesome and there will be less danger from malaria. Quinine will not be needed while the boat is on the open sea but should be given morning and evening when the boat is within islands or reefs and near the mainland.

Whenever the boats crews are exposed to wet from rain or sea breaking over the boat or other causes, a dose of quinine may be given. The dose of quinine is a quarter of a quile – each bottle contains 40 doses. Kroomen do not require it.

Sometimes when landing shellfish or wild fruit are procured and eaten, symptoms of poisoning result: colic, vomiting and purging. An emetic, unheated if necessary, till the contents of the stomach are fully evacuated is the most effectual treatment. In ordinary cases of colic if the stomach is full, an emetic is the best treatment followed by a dose of rhubarb mixture. After an emetic is given, wait until vomiting is induced then give water in large quantities, encouraging the patient to drink freely. When vomiting has quite ceased give the rhubarb mixture.

Diarrhoea – low diet, rhubarb mixture, if the first dose gives relief it may be repeated in four hours, if the bowels continue loose, chalk mixture and a dose after every motion.

Constipation – 2 purgative pills, followed some hours afterwards if necessary by a dose of salts.

Fever – Symptoms – headache, quick pulse, hot skin, thirst etc. Two fever pills, repeated at intervals of six hours till they open the bowels freely, then quinine a dose every six hours, low diet till the symptoms abate.

In case of a wound, wet lint lightly applied and kept wet with cold fresh water. In case of bleeding from a wound if the blood oozes out a pad of wet lint may be firmly bound upon the part, taking care however that that it does not cause pain and swelling of the part beyond the bandages. If blood spouts out from the wounded vessel, pressure must be carefully made on the bleeding point and maintained until the bleeding ceases.

Alan Gardner

Captain of HMS *Orestes*

## Return of Slave Vessels captured on the Eastern Division of the Cape Squadron 1st January - 30th June 1861

No.	Name	Type	Flag	Master and owner	Tonnage	Crew	Date	Captured	From	To
1	<i>Formosa Estrella</i>	barque	Spanish	Texeira	294	6 +deserters	4-Jan	Zanzibar	Barcelona	unknown
2	<i>Buswahi</i>	dhow	unknown	Abudu Abudu	-	59	20-Feb	Lat 16 42S Lo 44 45E	Mozambique	Mohilla
3	unknown	dhow	none	unknown	90	10	20-Mar	Lat 7 30S Lo 39 SE	unknown	unknown
4	unknown	dhow	unknown	Suri Arabs	89	-	22-Mar	Lat 4 46S Lo 39 10E	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
5	unknown	dhow	unknown	Suri Arabs	-	15	25-Mar	Lat 5 48S Lo 39 11E	Zanzibar	Pungany
6	unknown	dhow	none	Suri Arabs	64	13	27-Mar	Lat 5 2S Lo 39 11E	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
7	unknown	dhow	none	Persian Gulf	117	14	1-Apr	Lat 6 7S Lo 39 14E	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
8	unknown	dhow	none	Persian Gulf	69	27	3-Apr	La 6 6 30S Lo 39 14E	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
9	unknown	dhow	none	Persian Gulf	71	-	6-Apr	Lat 6 6S Lo 39 14E	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
10	unknown	dhow	none	Persian Gulf	116	18	8-Apr	La 6 6 30S Lo 19 14 15E	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
11	unknown	dhow	none	Persian Gulf	77	-	11-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
12	unknown	dhow	none	Persian Gulf	108	-	11-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar	Persian Gulf
13	unknown	dhow	none	-	120	25	12-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar	-
14	unknown	dhow	none	-	100	18	12-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar	-
15	unknown	dhow	none	-	103	15	12-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar	-
16	unknown	dhow	none	-	101	-	13-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar	-

	Name	Type	Flag	Master and owner	Tonnage	Crew	Date	Captured	From	To	
17	unknown	dhow	none	-	89	-	13-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar		-
18	unknown	dhow	none	-	147	15	14-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar		-
19	unknown	dhow	none	-	208	30	17-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar		-
20	unknown	dhow	none	-	164	40	17-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar		-
21	unknown	dhow	none	-	125	8	17-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar		-
22	unknown	dhow	none	-	174	1 other escaped	18-Apr	Zanzibar harbour	Zanzibar		-
23	unknown	dhow	none	-	97	escaped to shore	19-Apr	River Durnford	Port Durnford		-
24	unknown	dhow	none	-	106	escaped to shore	20-Apr	River Durnford	Port Durnford		-
25	unknown	dhow	none	-	89	escaped to shore	21-Apr	River Durnford	Port Durnford		-
26	<i>Mutsahil</i>	dhow	none	-	62	24	22-Apr	Zanzibar	Aden	Aden	
27	<i>Bashair</i>	dhow	Arab	Saleh bin Salem	148	34	22-Apr	Zanzibar	Aden	Aden	
Vessels captured by:		<i>Lyra</i>	18	Slaves captured by:		<i>Lyra</i>	216	Died		14	
		<i>Sidon</i>	8			<i>Sidon</i>	453	Ran away		1	
		<i>Persian</i>	1			<i>Persian</i>	-				
		<u>Total</u>	<u>26</u>			<u>Total</u>	<u>669</u>	Emancipated		654	

Source: MSS, BC356 A.2.1.

No.	Home port	Sailed	RN Captain	RN Ship	no. slaves loaded	died	freed	court	fate	remarks
1	Barcelona	1861	Comm Buckley	<i>Persian</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	
2	Mohilla	12-Feb	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	272 Mozambique	-	272	Mauritius	condemned	burnt
3	unknown	unknown	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	destroyed
4	Suri	19-Mar	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	99 Zanzibar	-	99	Cape	condemned	destroyed
5	Suri	unknown	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	4 Zanzibar	-	4	Cape	condemned	destroyed
6	Suri	unknown	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	destroyed
7	Suri	1-Apr	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	destroyed
8	Suri	1-Apr	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	103	-	2	100 Cape	condemned	destroyed
9	Boni Boo Arabs	1-Apr	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	destroyed
10	Boni Boo Arabs	1-Apr	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	destroyed
11		- none	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	3	-	-	3 Cape	condemned	destroyed
12		- none	Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-	-	-	- Cape	condemned	destroyed
13	Boni Boo Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-				condemned	destroyed
14	Suri Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-				condemned	destroyed
15	Boni Boo Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-				condemned	destroyed
16	Suri Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-				condemned	destroyed

	Home port	Sailed	RN Captain	RN Ship	no. slaves loaded		died	freed	court	fate	remarks
17	Suri Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-					condemned	destroyed
18	Suri Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-					condemned	destroyed
19	Suri Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	-					condemned	destroyed
20	Suri Arabs		Comm Oldfield	<i>Lyra</i>	7			1	6	condemned	destroyed
21		12-Apr	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	60	Mombasa		5	55 Mauritius	condemned	destroyed
22		- 14-Apr	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	111	Mombasa		5	106 Mauritius	condemned	destroyed
23		-	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	-				Mauritius	condemned	destroyed
24		-	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	-				Mauritius	condemned	destroyed
25		-	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	2			1	1 Mauritius	condemned	destroyed
26	Aden	19-Apr	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	3	Zanzibar		-	3 Mauritius	condemned	destroyed
27	Aden	19-Apr	Capt Crawford	<i>Sidon</i>	5	Zanzibar		-	5 Mauritius	condemned	destroyed

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The Baldwin Walker Collection (BC356)

This collection comprises some 200 boxes containing the papers from Baldwin Walker's entire life with few of them having a coherent reference besides the Admiralty and Squadron letters.

#### **(i) Admiralty Letters**

A1.1 February – August 1861.

A1.2 September 1861 – April 1862.

A1.3 May 1862 – May 1863.

A1.4 May 1863 – April 1864.

#### **(ii) Squadron Letters**

A2.1 May 1861 – April 1862.

A3.2 May – August 1862.

A3.3 July – November 1862.

A3.4 November 1862 – July 1863.

A3.5 August 1863 – April 1864.

#### **(iii) Box 3 Miscellaneous Folders**

Folder I - Naval Correspondence.

Folder II - Ascension Island.

Folder III - Bishop of Cape Town.

Folder V - Naval Advances.

Folder VI - Miscellaneous Correspondence.

Folder VII - American Vessels.

Folder VIII - French Correspondence.

Folder X - Harbour Development.

Folder XI - Dr. E Layard & A.H Layard.

Folder XII - Dr Livingstone's Expedition..

Folder XIII - Misc England.

Folder XIV - Misc Naval affairs.

Folder XVI - Capt Richard Moorman.



Folder XVII - Royal Naval Service Correspondence.

Folder XVIII - Sir Phillip Wodehouse (Governor at the Cape).

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